

Grassroots Development

Journal of the Inter-American Foundation

Responsiveness: From the Dyal Years Forward



VOLUME 26

NUMBER 1

2 0 0 5

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The Inter-American Foundation (IAF), an independent agency of the United States government, was created in 1969 as an experimental foreign assistance program. The IAF works to promote self-help development by awarding grants directly to organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean. It also enters into partnerships with public and private sector entities to mobilize local, national and international resources for grassroots development. The IAF's operating budget consists of congressional appropriations and funds derived through the Social Progress Trust Fund.

Grassroots Development is published in English and Spanish by the IAF's Office of External Affairs. It appears on the IAF's Web site at www.iaf.gov in English, Spanish and Portuguese versions accessible in graphic or text format. Original material produced by the IAF and published in *Grassroots Development* is in the public domain and may be freely reproduced. Certain material in this journal, however, has been provided by other sources and might be copyrighted. Reproduction of such material may require prior permission from the copyright holder. The editor requests source acknowledgement and a copy of any reproduction. *Grassroots Development* is indexed in the Standard Periodical Directory, the Public Affairs Service Bulletin, the Hispanic American Periodical Index (HAPI) and the Agricultural Online Access (WORLD) database. Back issues are available on microfilm from University Microfilms International, 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106. To receive the journal, e-mail publications@iaf.gov or write to the following address:

Grassroots Development
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Arlington, VA 22203

The purpose of this journal is to share grassroots development experiences with a variety of readers. The editor encourages submissions on relevant topics including, but not limited to, the following:

- how the poor in Latin America and the Caribbean organize and work to improve their lives;
- issues and trends in the development community;
- how institutions cooperate to further the development of the region.

Please direct query letters to Paula Durbin at the above address or e-mail pdurbin@iaf.gov.



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Grassroots Development

Journal of the Inter-American Foundation

Publication Editor: Paula Durbin

Photo Editor: Mark Caicedo

Foreign Language Editions: Darío Elías

Design and Printing: U.S. Government Printing Office

Cover: Sean Sprague. Antonio enjoys a bath. See the story on page 40.

Printed on recycled paper using soy-based ink.

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Letters from Our Readers

We are always delighted to hear from our readers and we were especially pleased with the commentary generated by our 2004 issue, most notably in response to Patrick Breslin's "Thinking Outside Newton's Box" and our interview with David Valenzuela. Instead of the letter from the editor that often goes on this page, we are using this space to share our readers' messages.

I am currently instructing a group of Central American agriculture cooperative managers and leaders—including from the Dominican Republic. One of my objectives is to introduce to this sophisticated and dedicated group of men and women new ways of looking at, thinking about and pursuing their work.

I have been receiving *Grassroots Development* for decades and much appreciate its contribution to development in Latin America. (I was a Peace Corps volunteer in Colombia in the 1960s, so you would expect a meeting of the minds.) I was particularly struck by the topics raised in the most recent issue that challenge assumptions and suggest the application of new metaphors. I would like to share the issue with the group, and am requesting 22 copies, in Spanish, for use in my classes with them.

Richard Harris
*California State Polytechnic University
Pomona, Calif.*

I have read your article "Thinking Outside Newton's Box", which I found fascinating. The ideas put forth come very close to what I have been trying to evolve as approach and methodology for promoting participatory development and management of natural resources in India with focus on the state of Gujarat. I was a senior civil servant in government of India, but for last couple of decades I have been working as NGO leader and have been able to overcome the handicaps of working as a bureaucrat in a top-down manner. In fact we have been able to start from the problems of the people, then move to what they

perceive as possible solutions and then to help them to interact with villages and villagers that have dealt with similar problems quite successfully. It's when such ground is prepared that we enter into dialogue about how the village where we are working can collaborate with our development agency to achieve goals for which we have some support to extend. It is in this context I found the points made in your article so fascinating. If IAF had been working in Asian countries also, I would have sought support and collaboration for some of the programmes that we have developed that we can scale up.

Anil C. Shah
*Chairman, Development Support Centre
Ahmedabad, India*

I have been reading your very fine journal over the part several years and appreciate the IAF approach to building up grassroots organizations and to supporting local government structures. I have been working in nongovernmental rural South Asian development since 1978 and experience the situation similarly to the ideas expressed in your above-mentioned issue in the article "Local Development: An Interview with David Valenzuela." It is encouraging to know that IAF is working in the direction that seems essential for uplift from poverty.

I also have some comments and a suggestion concerning a second article in the same issue: "Thinking Outside Newton's Box: Metaphors for Grassroots Development." I am happy that Mr. Breslin has shown the relation between progress the world has made in

the sciences and how this relates to our social realities and ways of thinking about the world. As I read the article, I had hoped that it might go further than it did, taking recent developments in social and organizational theory, stemming from the scientific progress in understanding life, and applying these to development organizations and work. In this sense, the article was disappointing. Perhaps a follow-up article in a future issue of *Grassroots Development* might consider this new learning on social and organizational realities.

Some valuable sources which might be of use in pursuing my suggestion follow: Manuel Castells's three-volume masterpiece *The Information Age; Global Capitalism*, edited by Will Hutton and Anthony Giddens; and, perhaps the finest work, which brings together many sources, *The Hidden Connections* by Fritjof Capra.

Thanks so much for your beautiful publication and my best wishes to all at IAF on your development efforts!

William Christensen

Institute for Integrated Rural Development, Bangladesh

Patrick, I was really WOWED by your article! Besides being beautifully written, it's one of the most provocative pieces I have read in a long time. It also resonates deeply with a book by Peter Senge and others called *Presence*. If you haven't read it, I now urge you to do so. I love discovering all these thoughts and conversations going on that reinforce and add to a dialog that's taking place in many sectors.

Traer Sunley

PACT, Washington, D.C.

[Patrick Breslin's] article provides another bridge to understanding bottom-up grassroots development for those who feel more comfortable standing on science and it prods those who already subscribe to the tenets of grassroots development to perhaps realize how much they may be buying into the linear models. Once you get past the administrative imperatives, the whole concept of a "project" is based on linear thinking. I've been thinking a lot about the concept of an enabling environment and funding strategies that might increase the probability of success. Among my muses has been Fritzof Capra, especially his book *Hidden Connections*.

He also starts with complexity, pointing to the similarities between natural and social sciences.

Steven D. Pierce

American University

Washington, DC

I am very interested in "Thinking Outside Newton's Box: New Metaphors for Grassroots Development" by Patrick Breslin and the interview with David Valenzuela, by Paula Durbin and Patrick Breslin, which from different points of view give us a clear vision of the meaning of grassroots development and the lines to be followed in evaluating the results.

Carlos Criollo

IAF Data Verifier

Quito, Ecuador

Patrick Breslin's excellent article reminded me of one I wrote in 1969 which stimulated Dante Fascell to establish the IAF.

George C. Lodge

Harvard University

Cambridge, Mass.

[George Lodge was a member of IAF's original board of directors. His article "Revolution in Latin America" urged an official commitment to improving conditions for this hemisphere's most destitute citizens through an "American Foundation" that would "find and fund the engines of change that work directly to revolutionize Latin American social and political structures." —ED.]





The Roots of Responsive Funding

"An institution is the lengthened shadow of one man."

— Ralph Waldo Emerson, *"Self-Reliance."*

Last year, 2004, was the 35th anniversary of the creation of the Inter-American Foundation by the United States Congress, a milestone *Grassroots Development* marks by taking space in this issue to remember our beginnings, visit some successes traceable to those times and then look at more recent directions.

Like the Peace Corps, a few years our senior, the IAF emerged, in 1969, in a context of disappointment and hope—disappointment in the failure of traditional foreign aid to reach the poor and hope that people could effect change at the grassroots. If the Peace Corps has developed as the shadow of founding director Sargent Shriver, the IAF continues to testify to the vision of its founding president, Bill Dyal. This retrospective recognizes his definitive influence. We begin with a conversation with Dyal on the formative period from 1971 to 1980, when he led the IAF, and then profile two Dyal-era grantees: Bosconia, which works with abused and abandoned children in Colombia, and the system of rural women's weaving cooperative Manos del Uruguay. Both are still with us today, long after IAF's funding ceased.

The Dyal years have in fact stretched into more than three decades during which Dyal's original insistence on responsiveness to the ideas of the organized poor has guided the IAF's work toward the development goal that had proved so notoriously tough: improving conditions in marginalized communities. Over time, that guidance, now policy, has yielded a proud record of investment in people who have confirmed Dyal's absolute conviction that

they indeed "know how." This wisdom pervades the remainder of this issue, including our profiles of contemporary solutions and strategies addressing HIV/AIDS and access to credit and water services. And it will spill over into our next issue focusing on the transnational phenomenon in development and IAF's involvement. At the IAF, responsiveness has always been the key to supporting emerging opportunities and to moving in the only acceptable direction—*adelante*.



IAF board chair Gus Hart, left, Edith Dyal and IAF founding president Bill Dyal in 1971.

Bill Dyal Remembers

By Paula Durbin

Q&A



Bill Dyal with former IAF representative Cynthia Ferrin, December 2004.

Current and former staff gathered in Arlington Dec. 17, 2004, to celebrate the 35th anniversary of the Inter-American Foundation and honor Bill Dyal whose unshakeable confidence in poor people and their ideas shaped the IAF's responsive role in grassroots development. In appreciation of Dyal's decade of service, when he built the IAF from the ground up, Patrick Breslin, IAF vice president for external affairs, presented him with a copy of IAF's book of photographs, *Making Their Way*, inscribed with Emerson's quote and signed by all of those present. Before the festivities, Dyal shared his reflections on his years at the IAF and on his lifelong commitment to social justice.

Q What prepared you for your work at the IAF?

A I think it was a combination of my missionary experience in Central and South America and Peace Corps background. I was working with people at the bottom, socially and economically, and that changed the way I functioned. I began to feel they had not been helped, had not been given the right kind of opportunity. Plus I felt strongly that they had good ideas about how to solve their problems. That was the way I began with the whole concept of responsiveness. We didn't tell them what to do; they told us what they wanted to do.

Q What had made you want to work with people at the bottom?

A I'm not real sure. I think because I had been at the bottom of the heap. I was born in Austin, Texas, in 1928 and grew up in a blue collar family. My father and my mother taught me so much about values, not the political values of today, but the fact that my dad used to say, "Just because you are poor doesn't mean you deserve to be given things." Neither of my parents had gone to high school but they insisted that their three sons—I'm the oldest—go to college and they made it possible.

Q How were you served by your missionary experience?

A I learned a lot about love and justice. I also learned how to be a rebel because I didn't go along with most of what the Southern Baptist Convention was about in those days. The view was very narrow.

Q How did you come to work for the Peace Corps?

A Bill Moyers, deputy director of the Peace Corps for a while and then press secretary for Lyndon Johnson, was an old friend of mine and he called me up one day in late 1966 and said, "You're going to be called up to be interviewed for a job with the Peace Corps." He had put my name forward with then-director Jack Vaughan. When I met with Vaughan and his senior staff about being director of the Peace Corps in Colombia, I could see everybody in the room was looking at me coldly: Who in hell was this Southern Baptist missionary? And Jack Vaughan put it all to rest

by saying, "He's a Baptist, like Bill Moyers." That was the beginning of a wonderful relationship with the Peace Corps. At that time Colombia had the largest program in the world with 800 incredible young Peace Corps volunteers scattered all over, and I learned a lot. I later became regional director for the Peace Corps for North Africa, the Near East and South Asia for about a year and a half. That taught me about other countries that I really didn't know.

Q What brought you to the IAF?

A The Inter-American Foundation board was looking for a president and I came out the other end of the tube. The board chose me, I think, because they were looking for someone who was not a professional development type and because I wasn't in the Eastern establishment.

Q How was that first board?

A The fact that the IAF was created under the Nixon administration brought to the board Republican business leaders with a vision of corporate social responsibility. I fell in love with those guys at the first board meeting. The chair, Gus Hart, of Quaker Oats, was a fantastic man. All the board members were a remarkable group of learners. They would listen to what we came up with and they didn't try to tell us, the young, green staff, what we should do. We were a ragged, rebel group I suppose, but they stood with us.

Q What did you think of the original concept for the IAF?

A I was happy with the idea that we would be independent. I liked the concept of funding nongovernmental organizations and that the grants did not have to go through the State Department or the Congress for approval.

Q But you did have to answer to Congress.

A Yes, and when I went up for my hearings, Representative Otto Passman let me understand that he was not going to his grave without eliminating the Inter-American Foundation. He said, "Why don't you go out and get a decent job, young man?" I think one of the telling moments was when I appeared later before Senator Proxmire of the Appropriations Committee and he asked me about a project and I

told him we had really goofed. He got down from the podium and shook my hand and said, "That's the first time in my experience that I have heard a bureaucrat tell the truth." From then on we had a remarkable relationship with the Senate.

Q How did the development community react to the brand new Inter-American Foundation?

A When Congress took the first \$50 million away from AID for us to distribute, every North American NGO tried to say, "That's our money. We know how to spend this better than you do. We can make this easy for you. We know whom to fund and we know the right people. Just turn the money over to us and you don't have to worry, you don't have to build a staff and all." I said thanks but no thanks and here's the door.

I had no clout in Washington, but we came through that all right because Representative Dante Fascell, the creator of the concept of the Foundation, invited me over to his office. He was a little short Italian guy and I was scared to death of him. We sat around a coffee table and he said, "What are you going to do when I call you and tell you I've got some people at my door who tell me they know better how to spend the money than you do?" I said, "I know you wouldn't ask me to do something that wasn't correct and we would have to look at that carefully." And then he asked, "What are you going to do when I call you up and tell you I have some people who need to be on your staff?" And I said, "Well, we are putting together a good staff and if you have some good recommendations, let's look at them. He looked over at me and grinned and said, "Damn it, I believe we've got one." And that was the kind of support he gave.

Q What was the biggest challenge?

A The whole lack of understanding of what development really is.

Q What is it?

A I think it is responding to people's needs. People know their situation far better than anyone from the outside possibly can. So you can respond to what they think and feel and what they think they can do. I think that's development, but it hasn't caught

on very widely. The problem is that for most funders, public and private, being in charge and telling people how to work is their only reason for being. But I think I know more about what development is not. It's not Lord and Lady Bountiful organizations. And it's not what I saw development agencies doing in Colombia, paying expatriates huge salaries while there were people in the country who could do the job.

Q How did you go about making the IAF credible in the context of the early 1970s when Washington distrusted it as radical and people overseas thought it was the CIA?

A I was trying to carve out a niche in a city that didn't understand what this kind of development was all about, that was blind to what we were trying to do, that in addition to government-to-government bilateral programs, there is a people-to-people way to work, and that the best solutions are often community-based and that you needed a flexible, open-minded organization to explore them. I felt way over my head. Our biggest challenge overseas was the U.S. ambassadors who were nervous. As for the local people, I knew we couldn't convince anybody we were not CIA, and I decided "by their acts ye shall know them," and people would have to know us that way.

Q How did you envision the operation?

A I felt we should not have staff in the field lest they begin to be little capitalists overlooking possibilities. And I think that made a big difference. We decided not to make loans and get the money back. We established early on that it wasn't the large grants that people needed the most, but \$10,000, \$50,000 that let them take a giant leap forward. We wanted to keep administrative costs under 15 percent, which was unheard of in those days and even today probably. I think some people, even some on our staff, thought the Foundation should develop into something really large. I never really felt it would or could be very big.

Q What did you learn from your IAF experience?

A I learned this could be done. I had always thought it could, but until we did it I had no proof.

Q What do you feel was your greatest accomplishment at the IAF?

A I feel proudest of choosing the staff. I think I chose the right people. I feel that if you are a leader you should give your staff their job and get out of their way and let them do it.

Q What were you looking for?

A I was looking for empathetic people who had culture, understanding, sensitivity and the language of Latin America and the Caribbean; who were able to meet with ambassadors and charm them and get out on a mule that afternoon, go out to the boonies and meet with the campesinos. That word empathetic, not sympathetic, is crucial because I didn't need people who felt they were going to give out good money, but rather people who would listen and understand from what was said whether these were the right kinds of organizations to support. And we had remarkable people who were able to do that. I think I had been sensitized during my missionary and my Peace Corps years to the right kind of Americans, if I can put it that way. It was a beautiful camaraderie we had in that very beginning staff, and I hope that is still going on because it is crucial to the life of the Foundation.

Q Is there anything you would have done differently?

A I don't think I would have made some of the mistakes I made with personnel. There weren't too many, but there were a few. And I think I should have done a better job helping the members of Congress and the government understand what we were all about. I think my temper was a little short-fused with closed minds. Why waste your time?

Q Why did you leave when you did?

A No one was pushing me out, but I felt I was getting too identified with the Foundation, that it was time for new blood. I still remember sitting on my dad's death bed in Texas and saying I had resigned. He said, "What are you going to do, son?" I said I didn't know. He said, "Well I think you're crazy as hell." I think he was right. I had two daughters in college. But once again Bill Moyers came to the rescue. He called me up and said, "Frank Thomas is a fairly new head of the Ford Foundation and in a quiet way I mentioned

your name to him." I sat down with Frank Thomas and he asked me to take a look at what they were doing. So I visited all Ford Foundation offices overseas and a lot of their projects here in this country and I whispered in his ear what I thought. He took advantage of a lot of it.

Then I got a call from American Field Service and I became the president and I learned a lot. And right after that St. John's College asked me to be president. I tried to tell them I was not a scholar, but one of the board members said, "We're not looking for a scholar. We've got plenty of those. We're looking for a leader." So I spent four years there, helping to create a sense of harmony. When I developed a brain tumor, the college community gathered around me. After that, I had to spend some years in recuperation. Then one day Peace Corps called me about a job. So I ended up in 1995 as Peace Corps director in Panama for two years. That was my last hurrah.

Q Do you keep up with the IAF?

A Not as much as I should. That's one reason this day is special for me.

Q What advice do you have for IAF presidents?

A You need someone who comes in and says, "I don't know enough, I'm here to learn and listen. I want to hear everything you have to say. And I will lead you in terms of what I have learned and I will be a learner with you."

Q Is there anything more you would like us to know?

A There's probably a lot. You don't often get to create something from scratch and this is what I enjoyed the most out of the job. The experience here taught me so much about the capacity of people who are given a chance. "*Se hace camino al andar.*" We helped to create those paths with the grantees. We couldn't have done it without them. They are the real story of the Foundation.

Bill Dyal's Long Shadow

By Steve Vetter

When Bill Dyal was honored by St. John's College, one of the speakers noted that he "possesses the fit of genuine authority—the kind of unassuming leadership that comes solely from personal and moral stature." So much artificial inflation of just about everything pervades our society: athletes on steroids, fraudulent accounting practices and claims of nonprofit status when ghastly amounts of money are being made. But we have had three and a half decades to think about Bill Dyal's work and verify the results, and we are here today to certify that it is the genuine article, the real thing.

The Foundation was created on a hunch that the old model of foreign development assistance, government-to-government, wasn't working that well. Bill's original vision as the founding president of the IAF was always clear: to help people to help themselves; to get behind them, not in front of them. His three Rs were responsibility, responsiveness and risk-taking. Invest in the people. Listen to their needs and plans to solve their problems; don't be the expert. Tom Ramey, one of IAF's early IAF vice presidents, often talked in nautical terms about the prevailing winds in foreign aid (blowing out of the North and associated with well-paid experts whose solutions rarely worked) and why they had to be corrected. Our goal was a new direction.

There are those who would argue that Bill's greatest contribution was

that he changed the attitude toward what the poor could do for themselves, the disbelief that there were poor people that were organized, and could think through how they would create a better life. All of us had to keep going up against that issue. When we published *They Know How*, it provoked a tremendous debate as to whether the poor in fact knew how. Some people still argue that they don't know how. We had few supporters and many critics who assured us that there were no local organizations to support and that we should invest our funds only in well-heeled North American NGOs, that there was nothing else to give the money to. As we consider the tremendous growth of civil society throughout the hemisphere and its powerful voice, we do need to pat Bill on the back—along with the early staff who had no e-mail, faxes, computers or even phones to rely on.


One of the tests of time is simply how well an organization is still doing after its founding. A remarkable thing about the Foundation is that it has endured for 35 years and it has sustained this vision of supporting nonprofit, nongovernmental organizations. The last 15 years have been especially challenging but the IAF has survived and thrived. I can think of no other government program that has been able to keep its eye on the prize for this long and sustain its budget and political support. Most of the major foundations talk the talk of supporting grassroots and



community development, but few come close to working the way Bill envisioned the IAF.

I'm intrigued with how important it is to get started right, from the beginning. We have all watched individuals and institutions get off to a bad start and never get it right. Our appreciation for Bill is that much deeper when we reflect on his role as founding president. He captured the spirit of an open exploration for new solutions as articulated by the poet Antonio Machado: "*Caminante, no hay camino, se hace camino al andar.*" Dyal assured us that "paths are made by walking." A whole lot of walking—and flying—got us off to a good start.

The above was excerpted from remarks prepared for IAF's celebration of its 35th anniversary. Vetter's IAF career from 1975 to 1996 spanned positions ranging from representative to vice president for programs to acting president.



Father Javier with kids spending the day in El Patio where newcomers ease into Bosconia's program.

The Most Vulnerable Colombians

All photos by Patrick Breslin

They're called street kids, urchins, *gamines*. They're considered criminal, disposable, a plague, a threat to commerce in city centers. They've been swept up and tossed in jails, murdered by off-duty cops, preyed upon by deviates, put into institutions. According to a UNICEF estimate, 100 million children and adolescents live on the world's streets, driven there usually by a combination of poverty and abuse. Some 40 years ago, to address the problem in Colombia, a young Italian Salesian priest, Javier de Nicoló, launched a program for Bogota's gamines. He still runs that program, popularly referred to as Bosconia, the name of one of its earliest centers. Today, the program counts 76 facilities throughout Colombia, and it has influenced dozens of similar programs around the world. Here, *Grassroots Development* presents two views of Padre Javier's program, the assessment of the former Inter-American Foundation representative who first funded it during Bill Dyal's tenure and the personal experience of a former *gamín* whose life changed direction when he stumbled into it.



The Most Vulnerable Colombians

Cristián Mendieta and Ronald Guerrero.

Bosconia on Balance

By Marion Ritchey Vance

As IAF's representative for Colombia from 1974 to 1979 and, later, director for the Andean region, Marion Ritchey Vance won approval for two major grants and three smaller awards channeled through Fundación Orientación Juvenil to support the Bosconia program. Although Ritchey retired in 1995, she remains the IAF's expert on this alternative for the children who fend for themselves on the streets of Bogota. Here she shares her insights on the grantee's success and potential.

Over the three decades I've known the Bosconia program, it has not only survived but has expanded, an accomplishment all the more impressive when considered in the context of murder, mayhem and crisis in Colombia. The logistics to keep the program going are mind-boggling. So why does it work? My conjectures will be anathema to the bean-counters. They can't be weighed, measured or quantified, and I'd be hard-pressed to "prove" them.

The first is as simple, and as difficult, as genuinely *caring* for these tough little customers. Padre Javier de Nicolás has managed over many years to recruit staff, particularly teachers, who truly see the kids as valuable human beings, not files in a case load or delinquents to be straightened out. Respect and affection permeate the program. The kids feel it, and they begin to behave accordingly—from the snotty-nosed urchin with an attitude just off the street to the well-scrubbed scholar at La Florida. The latter appeals to most of us. It takes very special people to love and

accept the former, who may have just hurled his dinner in their direction.

When Javier explains the program, he almost always refers to Jean Piaget and the other gurus of its underlying pedagogy. But for me the genius is in *how* their educational principles are applied, which brings me to my second point: *choice*. A kid has to work hard to get *into* Bosconia. He is not court-ordered, and he is not shanghaied. When Javier and colleagues put the program together in the late 1960s, the goal was to make it more attractive to kids than their *gamin* lifestyle.

And what made it attractive? *Ambiente*, the spirit and ethos that underpins everything. Javier seems to have tapped into and capitalized on the spirit of youth. Life is interesting and exciting; work is play. You can do it! The program appeals to the sense of daring that many of these kids have in spades. Institutions in the U.S. would not dare expose kids to the kinds of risk Javier takes with some of his ventures, such as erecting classrooms and dorms in the remote jungle clearings

of the Darien or the Orinoco basin—totally off the wall to most people, but for the kids an enterprise worth riding for days in an open truck to enjoy.

Fun is factored into the *ambiente*. There is always something going on that kindles a child's energy or imagination. *Music* is fundamental, part of the delicate balance struck between structure and spontaneity and a key to the success of the program. It develops not only individual talent but discipline, concentration, teamwork and responsibility. *Art* is similarly emphasized as essential to the kids' education and fit into society. *Beauty* also contributes to the *ambiente*. While most juvenile programs assume that a functional (read cinderblock) building and three institutional meals a day is all children should need, Javier insists on the best, convinced that kids will rise to the level of their surroundings. The flagship site "La Florida," on the outskirts of Bogota, is striking for its architecture, use of space and exuberant flower beds. Personal *cleanliness* is a bedrock from the moment a youngster opts to enter the program. The calendar of quarterly *fiestas* celebrating certain milestones in the year helps impart a sense of order and predictability for kids accustomed to chaos and uncertainty. Participation results in shared values and a feeling of community.

I don't mean to imply that it is all fun and games. Youngsters are encouraged from the beginning to take on an academic curriculum as demanding as any public or private school's to prepare for the exams leading to Colombia's highly regarded *bachillerato*: biology, chemistry, physics, trigonometry, calculus, English, Spanish, civics, philosophy—plus theater, to hone students' ability to relate to others, to speak in public and to think on their feet. Students absorb the material at their own pace and they follow current events assiduously. Visitors are invariably disarmed by the kids' grasp of history, geography and culture, and their insatiable curiosity to learn more. Youngsters also participate in hands-on workshops geared to a practical skill—from mastery of computer systems to making furniture, stained glass or textiles—and determine the one best-suited to their aptitude. Kids just in off the street begin by making something for themselves, a toy or a toothbrush, then for their clan, then for the community at large and then, perhaps, for sale.

To make this work-study structure palatable, Bosconia's founders deliberately incorporated aspects



The girls' orchestra.

of the youngsters' free-wheeling life on the streets:

- The program relies on *mobility* rather than confinement to keep kids engaged. When I first observed the project in the mid-1970s, the kids were constantly on the move. They lived in one place, studied in another, worked someplace else and were continually shuttled hither and thither, much as they had done on the street by hooking free rides on buses. Eventually, their geographic range

stretched beyond Bogota to the whole country, from Acandí on the border with Panama in the north to the Orinoco basin in the east.

- Living arrangements mimic the *camada or gallada*, small groups that form on the street for mutual protection at night. The children reside first in small houses in the center of the city then progress to townhouses in La Florida. Residents of a given casa form a clan, something they belong to, that gives them an identity and lets them exercise collective responsibilities. They select leaders from their ranks, many of whom progress through the system of self-government. While *autogobierno* is not completely free from adult influence, it develops leadership skills and effectively deals with disruptive behavior. It puts a positive spin on the role of the *largo*, or older kid who rules on the street. Youngsters get a real taste of what it takes to win the confidence of their peers, to inspire their participation in community endeavors and to mete out discipline.
- There is *freedom*. Nowhere along the way is a kid trapped. There is great tolerance for kids who want in, then go back out on the street, then want in again. I'm guessing that dropping out and coming back is more the rule than the exception, that few kids among those who ultimately "make it" do so without zigs and zags along the way.

- *Irreverence*, or a healthy tongue-in-cheek attitude toward society, religion and politics, gives the program credibility with kids who learn to spot hypocrisy very early in their lives
- The program incorporates *challenges*. Miserable as life can be on the streets, it is also the incubator of ingenuity and survival skills. Long odds don't faze kids used to tackling things that should be impossible.
- The program borrows the *argot, folkways and mores* from the street and adapts them as catchy aphorisms.
- The program is *adaptable*. An interesting new facet is outreach, in the form of contracts such as one with the local government, under which kids work with the city departments to clean up parks, plant trees and handle recycling. A bigger change was the earlier inclusion of girls in the program, largely because of pressure on Javier from the boys to *do* something for their sisters still on the street. During my most recent visit, I learned that Javier had concluded that his original dream of every kid coming out of the program a *bachiller* was not to be. The job market is so tight in Colombia that he was incorporating a more trade-oriented education providing a variety of marketable skills, manual as well as managerial, that will lead to employment or self-employment rather than swelling the ranks of secondary school graduates driving cabs.

I have cited the program's scope as a plus, but sometimes I wondered about its reverse side. Expansion from three sites to 76 scattered around the country today implies vitality. But could the head-long expansion be a sort of Ponzi effect that keeps the program going by relentlessly opening new frontiers? As an IAF representative, I often found that as I was trying to focus on last year's project, I would be whisked off to admire the latest casa and the newest stratagem. And "failures" don't slow Javier down. He can close things down, abandon cherished ideas, overcome tragedy and hardly miss a beat.

The more relevant concern is *succession*: Principles and strategies and procedures can be continued and copied, but Javier can't be cloned. What happens



Father Javier with another group in the Patio.

when he is gone? An exceptional human being, he has become all things to all people. He is father figure, educator, planner and architect, fundraiser, negotiator, problem-solver, and the spiritual inspiration that motivates kids and staff alike. I have never quite conjured up the individual who could fill those shoes. Promising candidates have emerged only to retreat either because power is not effectively shared or because the demands of the program burn them out, or both.

Succession is in fact complicated by the program's prestige and the size of its budget, which makes Bosconia a plum that many a politician or bureaucrat would love to get his hands on. Javier has maintained remarkable support for the program at high levels of government, including a succession of Bogota's mayors and Colombia's first ladies. Sustaining these relationships is a constant battle whose rules of engagement change with administrations, but he's kept it together for a quarter of a century. No one seriously challenges Javier, but a successor may be more vulnerable. Perhaps the answer will come through a new, more decentralized structure with a very capable manager at the top, a second tier of department directors with specialized skills and real authority and responsibility, and the graduates who now fill the ranks of educators perpetuating the program's mystique.

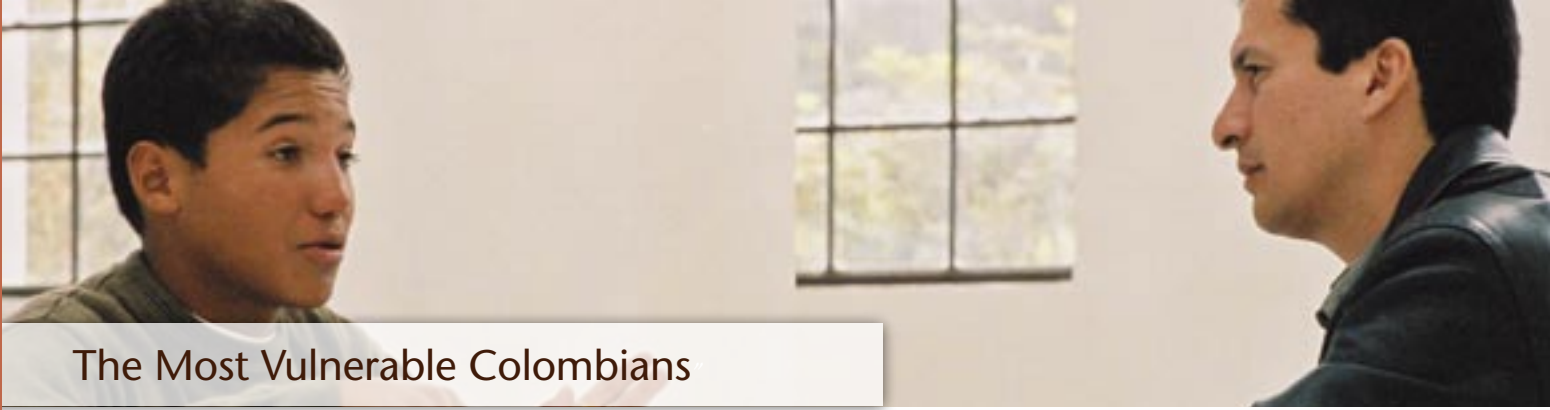
If being a model is an indicator of success, Bosconia should score very high. A diaspora of former teachers and students has built its principles into countless other institutions. We need, however, to better document Bosconia's replication and also its results. What has become of the kids who have graduated? The nature of the program and the chaos of Colombia make it all but impossible to keep track. I'm going to hazard a wild guess: that 25 percent of the kids who get three to five (or more) years of program education under their belts really do make it, i.e., get steady jobs and decent homes and provide well for their families; that another 50 percent get enough of a grounding to earn a living catch-as-catch can, like most Colombians, and stay off the streets; and that the remaining 25 percent have trouble securing jobs and housing, shaking drugs, or resisting the temptations of Bogota's underworld.

Perhaps the more important question is whether experience in the program breaks the cycle of domestic violence and abuse that sent so many kids to



A Bosconia resident repairs streets under a contract between Bosconia and the city of Bogota.

the street in the first place. Javier's cherished vision has been that enough love and security and immersion in a different way of life would lead young men (and now women) to relate to other human beings, especially spouses and children, with the respect and compassion so tragically missing from their own lives. Leonardo Escobar is one program alumnus who embodies Javier's dream. A university graduate, former Fulbright and an IAF fellow, professional, husband and father, Leo has, with his wife, created a home 180 degrees removed from his childhood. At the Dec. 17 event honoring Bill Dyal, Leo spoke to the difference IAF's investment has made for people in Latin America. When he finished, his happy three-year-old son said to his beaming *mamá*, "My daddy speaks very well, doesn't he?"



The Most Vulnerable Colombians

The Streets of Bogota: A Personal Journey

By Leonardo Escobar

In 1968, I was not yet eight years old, and I lived in La Dorada, Caldas, some 300 kilometers northwest of Bogota. My father drank too much and constantly mistreated my mother; she used to punish me frequently. My first semester grades were poor and my mother locked me up alone in the house while the family went to Medellin to spend a month with my grandfather. It was a blow because Abuelo Juanito gave me the security and love I was not getting from my parents.

Fortunately, the house had a terrace about three meters from the ground, from which I could climb into the trees and down to the street. That was the beginning of my experience as a street child. Our *gallada* had a great time playing and swimming in the Magdalena River. When we got out of the water we would smoke cigarettes and drink aguardiente. I went home only to sleep, and when my family returned from Medellin, my mother punished me until my whole body hurt. I decided to escape. Wearing a short-sleeved shirt and without a penny in the pockets of my short pants, I got on a bus to Bogota. When I arrived, night was falling, and it was cold and rainy. With the driver's permission, I spent the night on the bus, although I couldn't sleep because I had nothing to cover myself with. I hadn't eaten all day.

The next morning I began to explore a bleak prospect; streets filled with garbage, people sleeping on the sidewalks, abandoned houses, vacant lots and burned logs from the night before. Stores were

opening for business around the station and the avenue came to life with the deafening blare of horns and people hustling to and fro. Everything seemed confused. That morning, and many others, I had to withstand the bone-chilling cold; within a few days the skin on my face, arms and legs became cracked to the point of bleeding. Only after not eating for two days did I approach a lady with a pushcart, and she gave me food.

I was unaware of the danger I faced. I had landed in San Victorino, near the Parque de los Mártires, in downtown Bogota, one of the most dangerous and feared parts of the city. At eight I became a small adult, taking every day as it came, and drugs and alcohol were welcome company when I slept on the cold pavement. One of my first lessons was the value of a friend who became my big brother. Tote, 11, had a vocabulary of crude words, which I picked up, and was armed to the teeth with homemade weapons. Meeting him marked my initiation as a *gamín*, a street urchin, who had to steal to survive, participate in my *gallada's* rituals, and learn to defend myself against bigger children who tried to take advantage of my inexperience.

Encounters with adults, and even other *gallada* members, who wanted to sexually abuse me, were a frequent source of terror. I was the smallest child in the *gallada*. Tote, my protector for three years, taught me to fight and to win respect. I discovered that I had something valuable to share: I could read, write

and do basic math, unlike most of my comrades, and I could strategize. I knew when it was the time to steal and when danger was approaching, including undercover cops. One day when he was 14 and I was 11, Tote didn't come back to the entrance to a building where a watchman had let us sleep and his wife would sometimes feed us. Weeks later I learned that my friend had agreed to a fight to settle a score. I never saw him again. It was a devastating loss.

A few days later, weakened by the flu, I became a perfect target for a "Samaritan" who took me home and tried to sexually abuse me. I managed to escape and ended up in a hospital. The doctors said I had bronchopneumonia, a word I didn't understand but could never forget. I became the hospital pet, and the staff decided to turn me over to a boarding school. Realizing that I would lose my freedom, I returned to the Parque de los Mártires. A month after escaping, in late 1971, I was roaming near a school run by the Community of the Sisters of the Presentation. Hungry, I knocked on the door and the nuns welcomed me with food, a hot shower, clothing, and toys. Sister María de Sales then sent me to Casa Bosconia; without knowing it, I had taken the first step toward a new life.

Bosconia was the brainchild of an Italian priest, Father Javier de Nicolás, who came to Colombia in 1949. In the mid-1960s, as chaplain of Bogotá's Juvenile Detention Center, he became convinced that the correctional system was not educating boys; it was taking away their dignity along with their freedom, making them even more resentful and aggressive when released onto the streets. Why not work with the street urchins of Bogotá before they go into detention, he asked himself. Father Javier developed a philosophy that he later translated into the stages of the Bosconia Program, whereby boys and, later, girls progress step by step.

The first stage establishes emotional bonds with the children who are invited to participate in the activities conducted in the *Patios de Externos*, or drop-in centers. They are made to understand that the program is not an extension of street life, that they can't show up high on drugs, armed or looking for a fight. The second, or motivational, stage, with its generous dose of sports and games, challenges them to choose between the streets and the program. Some, to whom

drugs and life on the streets are more attractive than the program, have to choose several times. Since I had entered the program through Sister María de Sales, my guardian angel, I skipped the first two stages and began in the third stage, the residential program. My first impression was of cleanliness and order, soccer fields and basketball courts, and the happy sounds of kids playing. I was received with great affection and was assigned to Taironas, which, like other dormitories, was named for an indigenous tribe.

The end of my life on the street signaled an enormous psychological and physical change. The defenses I had picked up on the streets began to disappear and I felt weakened for a time. Memories of mistreatment pursued me. Sister María and Father



Leonardo Escobar interviewing Gustavo Alonso Garcés, opposite page, and Alexander Gaitán Murillo, above.

Alfredo's support and patience were fundamental to overcoming my reaction of aggression, isolation and even illness. Additionally, I was entering adolescence and didn't understand all that was happening to me. Fortunately, I met Father Javier, who had the ability to take care of all of us and still give each individual attention when most needed. He became my father, mentor and unconditional friend.

I learned to participate in my group. To my new peers, as on the street, I was still the "burguesito," the rich boy who could read and write, and I had to earn their respect and the confidence of my teachers. Eventually I was elected "tribal chief" of our dormitory and became a member of Bosconia's Council of Chiefs representing each dormitory. I led the group in morning gymnastics, the inspection of personal appearance, and cleaning the dormitory and the common areas. After school I worked with teachers on recreational and house activities. At bedtime I had to make sure everyone had settled down, because our weekdays



Adriana Jiménez.

began very early. We were kept very busy, with little time for idleness and bad habits. As the chief of my tribe, I was constantly challenged to fight until I decided to stand up to the dreaded "Aramba." We were not well matched in size and strength, so I got the worst of it, but I earned his respect and the others'. I had to be creative to survive. I always kept a larder of snacks in my pockets and, since I had become a whiz at marbles, I earned money by selling "garvinches" (glassies), which I inevitably won back to sell again. I supplemented my finances with small bonuses from the teachers and directors. All this attracted a group of older and bigger kids who defended me.

At 14, I decided to return to my family in La Dorada. When I arrived, I found my mother and siblings outside the house waiting for my father to let them in after his regular dose of alcohol. The reunion allowed me to rebuild my relationship with my mother, but I had to give up on helping my family. I returned to Bosconia, and I joined the República de los Muchachos, better known as "La Florida" because of its location in Parque La Florida. This fourth and final stage of the program for the children who were ready for self-sufficiency had, by 1976, an infrastructure comparable to any of the best educational institutions in Colombia. We met in El Cabildo, a circular hut accommodating 400 people, to make decisions and hold events. We elected a governing council consisting of a mayor and secretaries of government, finance, education, and health. Self-government meant punishing infractions. After discussion, we made one chronic malingeringer spend the day in bed while he was waited upon and his counterparts did his work. He was so ashamed that he apologized and asked that the sanction be lifted.

La Florida's residential section had 32 houses, each accommodating 15 people, and every eight houses constituted a neighborhood with a plaza and gardens. The administrative section had a large kitchen, a general dining hall, a multi-purpose room, a clothing cooperative, a library and a bank for our own currency, the *florín*. Our school included classrooms as well as workshops for vocational training and music, dance and theater. I discovered that I had an ear for music and I studied the transverse flute for a time. Whether or not we kept it up, all who ventured into music, theater or dance learned discipline, persever-



Julián Acevedo and Juan Esteban Sepúlveda.

ance and patience. By the late 1970s, La Florida had its first band, which has performed abroad. Today the program has several bands, as well as theater, dance and choral groups, which are sources of indescribable joy and pride.

In 1980 I was among the first 15 La Florida students to graduate from secondary school. Shortly thereafter, Father Javier told me I had been appointed to teach in the Escuela Autoactiva la Arcadia, an educational unit with a primary school and vocational workshops for 250 children at the stage before the República de los Muchachos. La Arcadia is a farm on the outskirts of Bogota. From the road you can see the big white house that dates back to the era of the great haciendas, surrounded by fertile fields where we and our students planted roses, tended gardens and cared for animals.

As an educator, I found I had a herd of unmanageable bulls on my hands, a group of 30 children, who reminded me of what we had put our teachers through. My colleague was Ramiro Rivero, a born leader, educator and musician and a friend. (His

tragic past, including the loss of his entire family, gave him no peace. On the street he had been burned over much of his body when he made the mistake, as many kids do, of lighting a joint after inhaling gasoline fumes, not realizing that his clothes had absorbed the fumes. After retiring from teaching, he decided to end his own life.) La Arcadia was the best opportunity for Ramiro and me to learn to be teachers. We had to be creative to avoid using force with the children because touching a child was grounds for dismissal. We tried various techniques to keep two of the boys from fighting, but to no avail. One day we hit on making them spend a day together never more than one meter apart, and they got through it without a single fight. They never became best friends, but they learned to live together in peace.

In 1983 Father Javier named me director of Casa Camarín, in Barrio la Candelaria, Bogota's historic center. It was a drastic change from the farm. Camarín was a closed space, a large dormitory with a row of bathrooms and showers and a small kitchen.



Girls' chorus.

It was part of the motivation stage, with an intensive detox program which a new group of 30 children, whose substance abuse included glue, coca paste, gasoline and alcohol, entered every 45 days. Once or twice a week I accompanied Majito, Manuel Ospina, on visits to the *camadas*, where street children slept, to invite them to join in the Patio's activities. Majito was a great teacher, a former street kid devoted to the program until the day he died. Once we had assembled a group interested in the program, Majito charged me with getting them from the Patio to Camarín. The kids, dressed in rags and stinking, would take advantage of the 15-minute walk to try all kinds of misbehavior. When we got to Camarín, I would mention the things they could not continue to do. Once, after noticing several kids smoking marijuana, I gave them one of my talks and left them alone to decide what they wanted to do. After a while, of their own free will, one approached and gave me their remaining marijuana and another gave me their penknives because they wanted to be promoted to the next stage.

Some children could never overcome their bad habits. Although I had tried everything—gasoline, glue and *pepas*, a bomb made from carbonated beverages, alcohol and a strong tranquilizer—I was never an addict. Additionally, relative to other kids, I had benefited from some education, and I wanted more. During my years as an educator and director, I had

to use everything I had absorbed from the program. I thought about resigning several times, but the changes in each child who came through La Arcadia, Camarín and Bosconia, wrought by dedication, perseverance, and patience, motivated me to continue.

In 1986, a Fulbright scholarship enabled me to study the theory and practice of moral development with Lawrence Kohlberg at Harvard University. On my return to Colombia, I resumed the directorship of Camarín and assumed responsibility for other houses, for training new teachers and for representing the program at seminars and other events. Beginning in 1989, thanks to two grants from the Inter-American Foundation, I spent an internship in the U.S. that took me to 12 cities and then earned an M.A. from the School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vt. In early 1993 I began a 10-year career with the De Waal Foundation of the Netherlands coordinating training centers for street educators in 10 Latin American countries.

To write this article, I returned to the streets of Bogotá after nearly two decades and found the program had grown from three houses in the early 1970s to 76 facilities, ranging from day shelters to impressive vocational schools. Additionally, it has projects all over Colombia serving children and adults representing the 31.1 percent of Colombians now living in poverty. While the streets are more violent, I found that coca paste and shoe glue, which were around earlier, are still the most widely-used drugs because of their low cost. They cause irreversible brain damage in children that society considers disposable. As youths, between 14 and 22, they become gang members for the same reasons that we took up with *galladas*: family problems, poverty, lack of job opportunities. A criminal record and no identity card combine to leave a gang member with no option but more substance abuse and more crime.

Trapezystas, or trapeze artists, is Bosconia's term for gang members who want to choose a different way of life through the program. It helps them obtain an ID and offers them job training. Visiting these *trapezystas* reminded me of Father Javier's concern at the lack of employment opportunities earlier graduates faced. An IAF grant in 1976 supported a first attempt at addressing the problem, and eventually Father Javier invested the funds in new educational opportunities and in a

training farm in Acandí. Job placement continues to be a challenge. Businesses that Father Javier approaches readily contribute to the program but initially resist hiring its graduates out of fear of their background. But Father Javier has persisted, and the program now places more than 2,000 youths in urban renewal projects, cleaning drains, spouts, and waste pipes; maintaining parks; operating public restrooms; painting facades; and repairing streets and sidewalks.

During my visit, I spoke with Jorge Iván González Bermúdez, 24, about how today's *trapevistas* are preparing themselves for the work place. González has been in the program for six years and is currently studying lithography and mechanics. He told me that he started to believe in himself when he began taking electricity and hydraulics classes. Jimmy Alexander Niño, also 24, has been in the program for four years and is studying graphic design, auto mechanics and electrical repair. He knew he had changed, he said, "when I started working and people began to look at me and treat me differently because they no longer saw me standing on the corner and making mischief."

Boys concerned about their sisters alerted Father Javier to a startling development on the streets since the 1980s: the increasing presence of girls. Assisted by his sister, the charismatic Sister Dora de Nicoló, he opened Juventud Unida for a small group of girls who urgently needed to be rescued. By mid-2004, when I visited, 40 percent of the program's beneficiaries were girls and young women between 8 and 22, among them Alba Castillo, 16, Catherine Manrique, 15, and Johana García, 16, all now in La Florida, who say their brothers' experience motivated them. "I could see everything he had been able to change," Catherine explained. Additionally, the program now offers adolescent and adult street-dwellers daily hot showers, food and recreation, as well as job training and placement, in facilities adapted to the population it serves. Each includes a restaurant, school,

technical and vocational center, laundry, recreational center, and an area dedicated to culture.

This testimony has brought back memories that have given rise to conflicting emotions of great sadness and great satisfaction. What has affected me most deeply is that my father and mother are no longer alive and that my son Nicholas will never enjoy their company. While they were not the best role models as parents, I am sure they would have been very good grandparents. My return last year brought me together with teachers who trained with me or whom I had welcomed to Camarín as students. I am grateful to them, to Father Javier and to the rest of his staff for their support during my visit. Each has reason to be proud of the example they are setting personally and professionally. It is they who give the strength and vitality to this excellent program for boys and girls.

Leonardo Escobar lives in the United States with his wife and son. He works for the consulting firm Resolution Dynamics.



Teacher Manuel Rubio (in goggles).

Manos del Uruguay: The Bottom Line

By Paula Durbin

Today, almost three decades after its first IAF award, Manos del Uruguay is the country's premiere producer of yarn and garments. Across Uruguay, its workshops, and the Montevideo service center that coordinates them, buzz with activity as cotton and wool are spun, dyed and eventually fashioned into an endless variety of shawls, ponchos, sweaters, scarves, caps, bags, carpets, blankets, tapestries, skirts and, more recently, bikinis that grace retail outlets all the way to New York's Fifth Avenue and beyond. At home, as Manos' general manager Rodolfo Gioscia points out, the Manos name enjoys more than mere recognition; a country-wide survey of Uruguay's best-loved brands placed it second only to the national dairy cooperative's.

According to everyone interviewed for this article, Manos' success, and in fact its survival, has depended less on products than on people. "We defended this project, we believed in it, and that's why it's still alive," said Norma Carugno, referring to the challenges of the past 36 years. She joined Manos in 1983, became president of her knitting cooperative in Totoral del Sauce, just outside Montevideo, chaired Manos' board of directors for two terms, and currently serves as board secretary. "If this had an owner," she added, "it wouldn't exist." Belonging, rather than ownership, more aptly describes how workers relate to Manos. The staff's level of commitment has made for a capacity to withstand an onslaught of difficulties other businesses couldn't manage, insists Cecilia Zaffaroni, who developed Manos' human resources in the 1980s.

Manos del Uruguay ensemble from Peruvian Connection's 2004-2005 winter collection.



To begin with, Manos del Uruguay was launched in 1968 under unpromising circumstances. Uruguay was deep into an economic decline that would only get worse. Martial law had been declared and would escalate into a state of siege followed by a decade and a half of military dictatorship. The work force consisted of 17 informal groups scattered from the outskirts of the capital to the Brazilian border, each usually served by a single public telephone. The knitters and weavers were mainly rural housewives; while crafts were a longstanding tradition in most of their communities, the notion that women could earn a steady income from them was unheard of. And as accomplished as they were, their handiwork barely reflected the vibrant palette and winsome design that have evolved into Manos' signature. Elizabeth Sosa, the weaver who currently chairs Manos' board, was a school girl in San José, 90 kilometers from Montevideo, when the small group that included her mother received its first order for tablecloths one meter square. "The wool those women worked with would scare us today because it was really rudimentary," she recalled as the rest of the board laughed, "washed by hand, coarsely woven and undyed."

But Manos' founder Olga Artagaveytia had seen beyond all that when she imagined an industry that would offer craftswomen not just employment but an opportunity to develop professionally and run the business. Artagaveytia, whose aristocratic roots show, calls her vision common sense. "I lived in the country," she explained. "I knew there were women producing handicrafts and that there was an enormous gap between them and the market. As I thought about how to organize their production and take it forward, I looked for allies and I found that this wasn't just my idea." After researching failed attempts, she and four like-minded individuals decided on their own approach. First they identified locations with established knitting and weaving traditions and women who were eager to work. Then they built a small inventory of rugs, ponchos and saddle blankets to test in two markets catering to some of the Southern Cone's most conspicuous consumers: Punta del Este in high season and the annual exposition of the Sociedad Rural in Montevideo. Priced at more than 10 times its cost, almost every item sold. "Clearly this was worth pursuing," Artagaveytia recalled concluding.

To improve quality, the board hired the late Beatriz de María, a former nun revered to this day by the craftswomen whose technique she refined. She also connected the groups to the Centro Cooperativista Uruguayo, which helped them become legally constituted co-ops. All 17 organized quickly, even though under Uruguay's military rule every meeting had to be authorized in advance and monitored by a policeman. Board vice chair Cristina López remembers one cop who became so caught up in her group's enthusiasm that he asked to join. More ominously, for years telephone conversations were tapped; Carugno recalls that Manos' garment-numbering system was questioned as a subversive code.

Mirian Hernández, a high school graduate married to the town baker, founded the cooperative Carugno joined in Totoral del Sauce, and for years the women worked in her garage. Under her leadership, the group saved enough to buy their own workshop in 1980. The owners were involved in a divorce and the man

PATRICK BRESLIN



Cooperative members untangling yarn in 1980.



PAULA DURBIN

Stria yarn

wanted his share of the price in dollars" I didn't know anything about dollars," said Hernández, "but I went to the bank and learned." A soft loan of \$500,000 from the Inter-American Development Bank in 1976 eventually allowed the other cooperatives to acquire scales and instruments and move their operations to spaces they owned.

In 1976, Manos also applied for its first grant from the Inter-American Foundation, funds it used for training and technical improvements. A second grant in 1980 facilitated the shift in management to the artisans. Freelance photojournalist Patrick Breslin, then on his first IAF assignment and now IAF's vice president for external affairs, covered the grantee for *Grassroots Development* 1980 (vol. 4, no. 2). He reported that Manos, with 1,022 artisan members, had become one of Uruguay's 10 largest employers; sales had reached \$1.3 million. "With its economic base seemingly established," he said, "Manos is now taking gradual steps to increase participation by the artisans in the direction and administration of the organization. The goal is to have artisans control the board of directors."

Artagaveytia began paving the way that year by inviting artisans to audit board meetings. By 1988, all the transfer of authority was a fact. Manos' bylaws were redrafted to limit board membership to artisans: a chair, vice chair, secretary and voting member nominated and elected by the presidents and secretaries representing each of the cooperatives. This process appears to have resolved the succession problem that dogs so many grassroots organizations whose founder is the driving force, and no one seems more pleased than Artagaveytia. "I have always said that Manos had two product lines. One is the ponchos and things," she said. "The other," she added, with a gesture to the board that seemed to encompass all of Manos, "is these señoras."

More than ever, the success of a grassroots project is determined by observable results. And Cecilia Zaffaroni, formerly of Manos and currently dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences and Communication of the Universidad Católica, wrote the book on how to gauge them, *El Marco del Desarrollo de Base*, based on an earlier version of the IAF's Grassroots Develop-

ment Framework. In Manos' case, Zaffaroni maintains the "social" results, as she calls them, are unequivocal: The objective to develop leaders was attained. "Manos showed that women with families and with no managerial experience could learn to do a budget and a balance sheet and assume responsibility for a business," she said. Underpinning this accomplishment, she insists, is the solid education still offered by the Uruguayan school system.

Others point as well to a strong individual work ethic and a desire for independence, when the women's movement was just starting. "Everyone was delighted to have an income from products made with their own hands, but they also lived through important changes," Elizabeth Sosa explained. "They were going against the wind and the tide. It doesn't seem so long ago but you have to consider the times. Women didn't have their own income; it was the husband who brought money home. This work took women outside of the house and they functioned autonomously. Additionally, they really learned to participate in meetings, to manage money, to make decisions, to organize orders, deliveries and storage, to handle all the requirements of the cooperative they were forming and to assume ownership of it. They grew as people, discovering abilities they never knew they had. It was a revolution."

Early on, Manos' products appeared in Europe, transported by travelers in Uruguay on other business. When a Manos cape wound up on the cover of *Elle*, the French fashion magazine "we nearly died," said Artagaveytia, "and we began to think seriously of selling abroad." The board hired an experienced British business consultant who pushed the directors to open an outlet in the United States. Although the U.S. staff got John Lennon into a Manos sweater and the photos were published worldwide, the New York site was short-lived. Its closure coincided with the beginning of serious problems at home.

By the early 1980s, Manos was foundering as Uruguay sank even deeper into recession. A final IAF grant in 1983, structured to resolve credit obligations, rescued it, according to financial manager Gladis Quintana, a 34-year Manos veteran. The enterprise has not received any donor funding since, except for a 1997 IDB loan of \$90,000, she said, and its only government subsidy is in the form of the tax exemptions

JUDITH SHANGOLD



Dying stria yarn.

COURTESY JUDITH SHANGOLD



A Judith Shangold design for Manos del Uruguay yarn.



Elizabeth Sosa, chair of Manos del Uruguay's board, with a Manos tapestry.

PAULA DURBIN

(from the value added-tax and the employer's share of social security payments) applicable to any similarly constituted organization. But without investors or assets—since all real property is legally owned by the individual cooperatives—“Manos can't access capital the way a supermarket can,” said Rodolfo Gioscia. “If we have a bad year, we're under water.” And there have been bad years, most spectacularly 1992, when Brazil devalued the *real*, and the period from 1998 through 2002, which culminated in Argentina's crisis and the plunge of the Uruguayan economy to new lows. Tough times not only shrunk local consumption but jeopardized sources of raw materials as small producers felt forced to dismiss employees, sell machinery and stop raising animals. Larger and more

apparently solvent local businesses folded.

Manos has navigated through the red ink partly by downsizing and outsourcing. Cooperative membership stands at 450, up from its 1998 low of 300 but down from a high of 1,200 in 1983; the service center's staff was reduced from 120 to 40 and now numbers 85. A round of retirements made the reduction in force a little less painful, and, according to Gioscia and Sosa, over the 22-year period thousands of women have found other employment because of skills acquired through the training Manos offers. The current complement is more productive than ever, Carugno maintains, thanks to better technology. Globalization has, at least initially, brought big orders, and, during high season, between 300 and 600 additional workers are contracted to meet the tight turnaround.

Revenues from Manos' entire production last year totaled \$4.2 million, more than double those generated in 1998, and exports accounted for 70 percent. Of those sales, \$600,000 is attributable to J. Crew's order for 87,000 mittens, caps and scarves that whole towns raced to fill. Other U.S. clients include Victoria's Secret, Donna Karen, Nordstrom's, Sak's Fifth Avenue,



PAULA DURBIN

Sebastián Romero, 18, was recently welcomed into Cooperativa Artesanal Totoral Fray Marcos by Mirian Hernández, right, his grandmother and CATFRAY's founder, and by María Medina, his mother, a CATFRAY knitter. “I'm the first man to do this job for the cooperative,” said Romero, who operates a knitting machine and is learning to cut.



María Inés Payssé, designer.

Bloomingdales, Ralph Lauren and Peruvian Connection. When *Grassroots Development* visited in March, Manos was to dye 11,000 kilos of yarn for Banana Republic. "Currently we are working for first-rate U.S. companies," said Carugno. "That requires significant quality and the ability to adapt to all of the client's requirements." A contract with an overseas client usually means proposing a design and incorporating the client's modifications before selecting the cooperative to fill the order, drafting patterns tailored to every size right down to the length of the fringe, compiling instructions detailing the quantity of yarn and how much facing to use, assuring the supply of raw materials, arranging for delivery of the finished products to headquarters, monitoring their quality and shipping them off usually within 90 days. Afterwards, excess materials must be picked up for storage in Montevideo or recycled; machines must be repaired.

"It has been a constant effort to, on one hand, identify the market, get the business and keep it, and on the other, coordinate all of the production from a distance," said Sosa. Much less pressured is the line of clothing and home decorations sold under the Manos del Uruguay label, usually through Manos' boutiques in Montevideo and Punta del Este. (Years ago, Artagavetia added crafts made by independent artisans selling on consignment, figuring that customers coming into the shops for a ceramic vase might also pick up a poncho.) Originally the line



Spinning.

targeted mature, affluent Uruguayan women interested in quality, comfort, warmth and color—something of a marriage of Eileen Fisher and Missioni. Manos recently hired new designers, such as María Inés Payssé, 23, to appeal to younger buyers as well. Even so, explained Sosa, "we just don't have the volume in Uruguay, except for woolen yarn. That's why it's so important to export."

Unfortunately terms for producing much of its export-led volume are increasingly dictated by low wages paid elsewhere in the world, reducing Manos' margin for overhead, and the losers in the equation are the artisans. Since beginning operations, Manos has been committed to paying the minimum wage, calculated by how long an item should normally take to complete; a fast worker could earn more, a slow worker makes less. Now negotiating a price that allows Manos to pay the minimum wage puts the contract at risk. "We do everything we can to please these clients," said Sosa. "but when the price goes too low, we give the co-ops the option of not accepting the work. Often we do the work anyway, to try to keep the client." But is that enough?

"Big companies don't care whether they are giving work to rural women," Gioscia was quick to answer. "The artisans understand that they have to deliver exactly what the clients want at the price they are willing to pay. China isn't a possibility, it's a reality, and it is the biggest competitor, not just for Manos del Uruguay, but the whole world. We are already losing business and that is going to get worse. Our only choice is to improve quality, improve compliance, get



MARK CAICEDO



used to working with even smaller margins and offer what the Far East cannot." Gioscia also hopes to develop a stronger presence in Europe where according to a May 9, 2005, *Newsweek* article by Fareed Zakariyah, China's sales of pullovers has increased more than 534 percent since Jan. 1.

"Obviously we should aim for specific markets with specific products," said Carugno. Manos has now taken to heart perhaps the best advice from its British consultant of 20 years ago—to make and market a bread-and-butter product which he thought should be stria yarn. Hand-spun and hand-dyed to produce subtle gradations in color that lend a soft shimmer to a finished garment, it has been around since the 1970s. Recently it has soared to a level of popularity that Woolwinder's Web site describes as "almost hilarious." Judith Shangold, owner of Design Source, says sales in the United States have increased tenfold since she became the U.S. distributor in 2000. "The yarn is attractive to knitters for many reasons, the softness, the range of 95 colors, the striated way it is dyed, and the pattern support we develop here in the U.S.," she said, referring to her own designs ranging from sweaters to leg warmers to afghans. "And the appeal of the Manos story has proven a very valuable marketing tool," she added. "People like the idea that buying a product supports women's economic development."

For now, says Shangold, Manos' yarn faces no threat from Asia. "Other producers in Uruguay are trying to get a foothold with a similar product," she added, "but I think they are having a hard time competing with the Manos name." A loyal Manos customer is Peruvian Connection, specializing in catalogue sales of high-end South American fashions. "Since at least the 1970s, garments produced by this wonderful cooperative have enjoyed great success," said CEO Annie Hurlbut who buys both yarn and Manos-designed clothing. "As far as competition is concerned, Manos del Uruguay produces handcrafted quality in a limited quantity that would not be adequate for the Targets of the world. China is more adequate for that kind of production." Widening a narrow niche for discriminating consumers bedevils companies everywhere as the next phase of globalization looms. Can Manos retain its competitive edge? "We sell fashion," said Carugno, "and if we are still alive after 36 years, it's because we have constantly adjusted."



Leticia Pérez, 21, learned to knit a year ago and proved so gifted that she is now CATFRAY's instructor.

DREAMS AMONG THE RUINS: A New Generation of Guarani Rethinks Development

By Patrick Breslin

All photos by Patrick Breslin

Perhaps history weighed too much. From their founding in the 1970s, the tiny Guarani communities of Fracrán and Perutí in Argentina's Misiones province labored in the brooding shadows of the ruined 17th century Jesuit missions that dot the vast basin of the Parana River.

Like those early missions, Fracrán and Perutí were created in a union between church-based Spanish speakers and nomadic groups of forest-dwelling Guarani. Both were responses to threats. The Jesuits, as depicted in the award-winning 1986 film, *The Mission*, created some 30 reducciones, large plantations built around schools, workshops and churches, in part to protect the Guarani from slave raiders. In a modern parallel, Fracrán and Perutí were built on land donated by the Catholic bishop in Posadas, Misiones, to shelter two small bands of Guarani—some 66 families—forced from their ancient forest home by settlers clearing land. Although of enormously different scale and separated by centuries, both experiments were microcosms of the pivotal transition in human history, from nomadic hunting and gathering to sedentary agriculture.

That was the context in which, almost 25 years ago, the Inter-American Foundation made a grant to help the two nascent communities develop an economic base. Recently, I traveled to Misiones to see the long-term results. What I found were eerie connections with the trajectory of the Jesuit missions, extending to the appearance in *The Mission* of about 50 of Perutí's

and Fracrán's inhabitants, along with a brutally honest discussion of development lessons. Both attempts to help the Guarani flourished brightly for a while. In an age of wholesale destruction of indigenous societies in the Americas, the Jesuits and their Guarani charges built a model of peaceful, productive cooperation that lasted 160 years. Voltaire, one of the Catholic Church's fiercest critics, mused about the Jesuit missions: "Was there ever before in history a time of so much good and so little ill?" But international power politics and divisions within the church eventually doomed the missions. The Jesuits were expelled, the reductions dismantled. Today, the best preserved draw contemplative tourists on a detour from the thundering waterfalls of Iguazu nearby. Others have become only evocative crumbling walls, succumbing to the embrace of sinuous tree trunks and encroaching vegetation.

The blossoming and wilting of the more recent experiments at Fracrán and Perutí ran a shorter course. Starting in late 1978, the communities took shape and established the first bilingual schools in Misiones. In 1982, with the IAF grant, they added ambitious economic activities, raising chickens and pigs for sale. But 13 years after the experiment began, changes in the local church hierarchy led to the withdrawal of the project's advisors; Brazil's marketing of cheap frozen chickens undercut one of the pillars of the villages' emerging economy; and a disastrous fire at Perutí destroyed the pig project.



However, the modern Guaraní communities, unlike the historical ones, survived, with many of their gains intact. Now, a new generation of leaders, shaped and tempered by the experiences of their parents and grandparents, is examining the past and redefining community goals.

Their reexamination begins with the original dream of the Guaraní leaders who approached Monsignor Jorge Kemerer, bishop of Posadas, in 1978. One, Pa'i Antonio Martínez, summarized his people's plight for the bishop: "The forest is no longer free, we cannot continue to live by hunting, fishing, growing corn. The forest is disappearing as colonists clear it. To live, we have to work for them. I ask only one thing—a school where our children can learn their own language, Guaraní, but also the language of the whites, Spanish, so that they no longer laugh at us, and math, so that they don't deceive us when we ask what is owed us."

Another leader, Cansio Benítez, had a complementary request. "We have no place, we live by the side of the road. We wish to no longer be exploited by the colonists and the tourists. We want our own land, our own houses, our own tools, to work the land and live from its produce," author Selim Abou quotes him in *La "República" jesuítica de los Guaraníes 1609-1768 y su herencia*. By this time, the two bands of Guaraní had been squatting on poor quality land and living from a few hand crafted articles sold to tourists. "They suffered from tuberculosis and syphilis," recalled Marisa Micolis, a Misiones native of Italian ancestry and a graduate of the Sorbonne, who became director of the project Bishop Kemerer created for the Guaraní. "They just lived under the trees or moved from place to place. But what they wanted was quite clear: to continue being Guaraní but also to use some of the advantages of the white world to have a better life."

Kemerer's response was to provide a large parcel of land for each of the two bands, and to create a team headed by Micolis to design and carry out an integrated development plan for the Guaraní as they formed the new communities. With funding from the church, and from international donors including the IAF, the communities soon had their bilingual schools, as well as cleared land for family and communal plots, fruit orchards, bread ovens, carpentry shops, sewing machines, and a cooperative for handicraft production. IAF funds provided cement installations and water systems for chicken and pork production for sale to neighboring towns.



A student at the bilingual school in Fracrán.

By all accounts, Micolis' team formed a strong connection to the Guarani. "I spent 15 years going back and forth to the communities," Micolis recalled. "We formed a group of men and women who can continue this work. They're constantly in touch with us. A bond was forged." Maria Rojas, who now works for the provincial government, worked in Perutí and Fracrán as well as in many other Guarani communities in Misiones. "Fifteen years of my life I spent there, but I liked it. I have so many memories of those years. It was like a dream." Beatriz Acosta, a primary education teacher, is now director of the school in Fracrán. In 1985, she was invited to work there for two months. "I fell in love with the community," she said, and she's been there ever since, except for three years in Perutí.

The personal ties between the Guarani and the members of Micolis' team clearly are still close. But Acosta pointed to a problem at the heart of the project, saying, "The land, and everything else, was given to them. They have a strong culture, but they are very dependent." Many of those employed by the project believe that the Guarani were fully involved. But it was obvious on my recent visit that the Guarani share Acosta's perception of a relationship that created dependency.

My companion in trips to the two communities was Javier Villalba, a 27-year old Perutí native and secretary of the Association of Guarani Communities [Asociación de Comunidades del Pueblo Guaraní]. We met in Posadas, then drove north to Perutí, which sits just off Route 12, the main highway between Posadas, capital of Misiones province, and Puerto Iguazú and the Falls. The dirt road, almost impassable in rainy seasons, winds past a deserted lumber yard and modest cement-block houses and divides in front of the long low school house. Across from the school is a recreation area and a thatch-roofed shelter for community activities and meetings. Some 76 families live in Perutí, and within minutes of our mid-afternoon arrival, the shelter was filled with villagers of all ages, eager to talk about their village's brief history.

Mario Muñoz started the conversation, in Guarani, with Villalba translating into Spanish. Muñoz is Perutí's shaman, or religious leader, after having served previously as cacique, or political leader. "In general, the project worked," he said. "The two goals, land and schools, were achieved. We wanted the land to safeguard our language and our culture, and now we have a sense of security because we are on our own land." But Muñoz also recalled that so much was not in the Indians' hands. "The people who helped us acted like parents. The directors of the project were in charge of everything. All the projects were invented and managed from outside, not by the community members."

The outside experts handled the IAF-funded infrastructure for raising chickens and hogs, worsening the dependency. "There wasn't enough training," Javier Villalba has concluded. "People came here to manage, to teach. But they didn't live here, and they didn't have the patience to teach the people enough so that they would be able to continue themselves. The chickens were sold without the community knowing exactly what happened. We never had control of the sales."

With Villalba translating, several of the villagers took me on a walking tour that quickly reminded me of a stroll the previous day through the ruins of San Ignacio Miní, where broken walls and the outlines of foundations suggest the dimensions of the economy that had thrived there with the Jesuits. We stopped first in Perutí at two large cement slabs that had provided space for 600 chickens each, complete

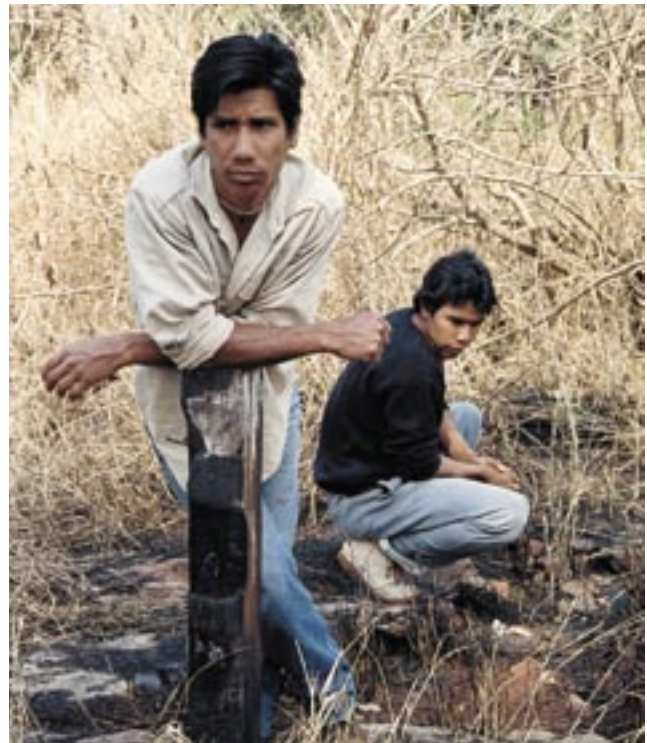


Cacique Ricardo González, Javier Villalba and his father, Mártires, all of Perutí, viewing a book on their community by a Lebanese Jesuit.

with a system piping heat to the birds. “There were new chicks every week,” Villalba relayed. “They killed and cleaned them here, and sold the meat in nearby supermarkets. Everything came in and went out on a truck, but we didn’t administer the enterprise.”

The observations continued at the site of the former pig pen. All that remains are charred stumps of the shed, a concrete floor and a few twisted pipes. “A fire, probably caused by a short circuit, destroyed the whole thing about 10 years ago,” Villalba said. “But the pig project really failed because people weren’t trained. It was big, too big. An installation for 100 pigs each weighing up to 150 kilos. There was a water system, with spigots where pigs could suck. Meanwhile, the people were still carrying their own water from the springs. The animals had a better infrastructure than the community.” This image of the pigs contentedly slurping water from the pipes while people trudged by toting heavy buckets still drew laughs from the villagers tagging along, even from those too young to clearly remember the project.

Farther into the project’s ruins was the carpentry workshop donated by a European funder. This shop made the bows and arrows, and even a harp, used in the filming of *The Mission*. In its heyday, teachers taught carpentry to Guarani boys, but the teachers also ran the workshop’s business—buying lumber and selling doors, windows, beds, tables and chairs on order from the surrounding towns. Now the building is deserted, saws and drill presses and planers stand rusting, and solid work benches equipped with vises



González at the burned-out site of the IAF-funded pig project.

are covered with dust. On the other side of the town, an industrial size sawmill is likewise abandoned. Over and over, as at the Jesuit ruins, comes a sense of loss, of devastation, of succumbing to history.

The story at Fracrán, I discovered a couple of days later, was less dramatic, because the project’s scale at Fracrán had been less ambitious. Pigs and chickens weren’t marketed there on the same scale as Perutí. Instead, the 55 families now in the village raise animals for home consumption. As Beatriz Acosta pointed out, “Anything else would tie them down and they don’t want to be tied down.” Fracrán maintains more of the nomadic tradition. A family will suddenly decide to leave on a trip, taking their children, which, Acosta complained, plays havoc with the school schedule. At one time, Fracrán produced tobacco, but residents gradually abandoned it because of their concern about the pesticides required and the related health problems of children in nearby communities. Sewing is still a source of income for Fracrán’s women and the sewing machines from the project are still in use. The well-equipped carpentry workshop still functions in a reduced way. The teacher is a master carpenter who works with student assistants, turning out beautifully custom-made cabinets for nearby customers.

As at Perutí, there is a strong sense of what the communities have gained. The direct link to the past is the diminutive but dynamic figure of Angela Martínez, daughter of Pa'i Antonio, who remembers the nomadic years. "We lived without security before we had the land," she told me. "We suffered, walking kilometer after kilometer, carrying everything on our backs. From such suffering, and from our fear of the whites, came the idea of requesting land. Now, with our own land, we no longer fear the whites." Health improvements have also endured. With the tiny clinics that are still maintained, the project raised health standards for the communities. "They're healthy and strong," Maria Rojas pointed out, "compared with other communities that never received this kind of support, and where tuberculosis is still a threat."

The bilingual schools are the project's other enduring achievement. María Rojas recalled that the Guarani leaders "wanted the schools so that their children wouldn't be exploited by the contractors for whom they worked. That was achieved. Now they own the plots and their houses, and if they go to work for a contractor, they know how to defend themselves." In both Perutí and Fracrán, the primary schools are the center of village life, bustling with activity, and highly valued. Village meetings take place on their grounds. In Fracrán, there are 128 students, who enroll at age 4 after a pre-school program and can continue through the ninth grade. The children start school speaking only the Mbya dialect of Guarani; by the seventh grade they are reading and writing in both Guarani and Spanish. Perutí's school has five computers, which gives the students a certain status with nearby town kids. The teachers, now paid by the provincial education ministry, are uniformly enthusiastic about their students. "They're bright and they're serious," one told me. "They learn quickly, they enjoy school. It's a delight to teach them." In one classroom, I struggled mentally to keep pace with a fifth grader who batted answers to math problems back to a teacher as if they were tennis balls.

Perutí and Fracrán made the idea of bilingual education feasible for Misiones. When Marisa Micolis left the directorship of the project, she became the provincial minister of education. During her four years in that post, she held assemblies involving many of Misiones' 52 Guarani communities and was able to

encourage more than a dozen bilingual schools. Many of the teachers were recruited from neighboring Paraguay, where Guarani is commonly spoken. In Perutí and Fracrán, some of the early graduates now teach in the schools they once attended.

It has been almost 15 years since the church-supported project came to an end, leaving the Guarani in a state of bewilderment. With the project team withdrawn, a new priest came to live in Perutí. He reversed Bishop Kemmerer's policy of respect for Guarani religious traditions and began to proselytize. The Guarani bridled. He decamped after a couple of years, and arguing that it belonged to the church's project, he took the community's tractor with him. The ambitious economic activities—funded by IAF and other donors—had already declined. The Europeans who had provided the carpentry workshops never came back. The IAF failed to see that the animal production and marketing it supported would not become sustainable in a context that emphasized assistance over empowerment.

Since then, Perutí and Fracrán appear to have lived a sort of lethargy. The schools continued to function, with the provinces's education ministry paying the teachers. Nuns continued to staff the health posts. But there were no government programs available to help sustain the agricultural activities initiated during the project. Income came from the work adult men and their sons find, mainly on nearby mate plantations where they earn subsistence wages picking the leaves for the tea favored throughout the basin of the Paraná and Uruguay rivers.

Recently, a new generation of leaders—the first educated in the bilingual schools—has emerged in the two communities. All are completely fluent in both languages, although their preference for Guarani is apparent, as is their insistence on preserving Guarani culture. Fracrán's cacique, Juancito Martínez, who teaches Guarani in the school, delights in leading the young people in celebrations of Guarani songs and dances at the community's spiritual center. Ricardo González, cacique in Perutí, was planning communal work days to construct a similar facility in his village. Villalba is exploring legal steps to change from Javier to the Guarani name he received from Perutí's shaman after his first year of life—a tradition which bases the name on the child's character and expresses hopes for that child's future. Javier is the third ranking leader in



Perutí, and as secretary of the Association of Guarani Communities, he stresses its three requirements for membership: Guarani ethnicity, participation in community activities and an interest in defending Guarani culture. All agree strongly with Angela Martínez, Fracrán's matriarch: "If we respect ourselves, the whites will respect us too."

The Association also has economic goals. It defends the communities' land claims and seeks to be the bridge between the communities and government for agricultural programs. It supports students who leave for high school, it searches out markets for handicrafts. But Villalba and the caciques believe that renewed efforts at economic development should start with the individual communities. "There are so many different ideas in the communities," said Villalba. "It would be too hard to get an agreement on a project within the Association."

For Juancito Martínez in Fracrán, the goal is more work in the community for the children now growing up. "We need to think of their future. The world is changing now. Everything is computers. There are young people who don't want to go outside the community to continue their studies, but we should have a way for them to learn a trade, something with which they can work and eat. We've got agricultural schools, we can grow mate to sell. We could do more with the carpentry shop, expand the sewing workshop."

In Perutí, Villalba takes some of his ideas from the example of his grandmother, an incredibly tiny woman with a deeply creased face, who personally cleared more than three hectares behind her house where she grows an abundance of fruit. She reinforces Villalba's belief that the communities should never again take on a project that they cannot run themselves, and that agricultural self-sufficiency is the first and basic goal.

My last conversation in Perutí was with cacique Ricardo González. He grew emotional as he described how he and Javier spoke often of their dreams for the future. He brought up the community-wide discussions of the preceding days. "It was painful to go back over that experience," he said. "Remembering what the community had at one time, and what has been lost. But I learned from it—that we have to work in unity, that work has a value, that only by working do you learn. Our generation has a sense that we have to start building again, and this time we have to do it ourselves."

Patrick Breslin is IAF's vice president for external affairs.

WOMEN AND MICROCREDIT

in an Ecuadorian Community

By Marnie Schilken and María Eugenia Lima

All photos by Dana Hill



Katy Cornejo started her computer shop with a loan from FUNDAMYE.

Located on Ecuador's southern border, Huaquillas is not a popular tourist destination. Derek Davies and Dominic Hamilton's *Traveler's Ecuador Companion* describes it as "an unkempt, dismal place with a reputation for smuggling and pickpockets." *The Rough Guide*

to Ecuador cautions that "Huaquillas is a chaotic, jerry-built, mosquito-ridden border town that most people ensure they spend as little time in as possible." Huaquillas, population 27,000, is perched on one side of the International Bridge opposite Peru. Money changers, their briefcases filled with U.S. dollars and Peruvian *nuevos soles*, sit near the bridge on plastic folding chairs exchanging currency for the backpackers and other travelers on their way south. Taxi drivers charge exorbitant fares for the one-mile drive between the immigration office and the border.

The disasters tormenting Ecuador during the 1990s battered Huaquillas and its surrounding communities. Armed conflict between Ecuador and Peru, most recently in 1995, over territory with supposed deposits of gold, uranium and oil, resulted in civilian casualties and an outflow of refugees. Then in 1998 and 1999, the torrential rains of El Niño flooded canals and swept away hundreds of houses in crushing currents of water, leaving residents to scramble to safety with what they could carry. Finally, in 2000, with petroleum prices falling worldwide and Ecuador's external debt burgeoning to almost 50 percent of its national budget, the country's banking system collapsed. The number of Ecuadorians living in poverty rose from 3.9 million, or 34 percent of the population, to 9.1 million, or 71 percent. Most businesses in Huaquillas had depended on Peruvian clients because Ecuadorian products cost less than Peruvian goods. But with the bank collapse they lost their competitive advantage; even their Ecuadorian customers were crossing



Lorjia Luz Moroch Coello launched a pastry and international foods store with her FUNDAMYF loan.

the bridge to buy more affordable merchandise. Men streamed out of Huaquillas in search of employment, leaving behind a disproportionate number of women as their families' sole support.

Notwithstanding the hardships, the residents who remained have proved resolutely committed to the community that is home to them. Like América Rueda, one citizen who struggled through the tough times, they not only wanted to stay in Huaquillas but to make it a better place in which to live. "During the most recent war with Peru, people fled this area," she explained. "We had to choose between abandoning our houses and the possessions that had taken a lifetime to accumulate, or staying. We chose not to go. We were afraid. We didn't know if we could survive. This tension, this struggle united us forever, so that now we are here together fighting to improve our lives and the lives of our families."

Eventually Rueda and others banded together as el Frente Democrático de Mujeres (Women's Democratic Front) (FDM), a group dedicated to community action that includes practical solutions to Huaquillas' pressing problems. FDM members then turned to Fundación Mujer y Familia Andina (Foundation for Women and Andean Families) (FUNDAMYF) for help in developing a strategy that would improve conditions. A grassroots support group with a 10-year history of successful projects, FUNDAMYF is known for its encouragement of dialogue on women's rights and for its efforts toward promoting legal reforms. Its members are economists, sociologists, anthropologists, engineers, educators and lawyers who provide their services free of charge to



With her loan, Rossy Quintana expanded her beauty salon.

local government entities and neighborhood groups addressing the needs of the poor. The FUNDAMYF-FDM partnership resulted in seminars, workshops and forums for FDM members. Later, FUNDAMYF assisted FDM in surveying neighborhood needs, designing an action plan and seeking funds.

The plan was submitted to the IAF and resulted in a grant to FUNDAMYF in May 2000. FUNDAMYF called its IAF-supported project "Building a Municipality Related to Grassroots Development." Activities targeted 300 families in Huaquillas for services and training. Participants learned about leadership, organizational skills, enterprise management, and the use and management of credit funds. Through diagnostic surveys, they identified the characteristics and needs of their neighborhoods. Later, in public meetings, they decided



Mireya Ordóñez used a loan to buy a market stall for her produce.



Seamstress Teresa Fernandez is known for quality clothing tailored in the shop she opened with FUNDAMYF's assistance.

how to address those needs and presented their proposed solutions to their municipal government.

FUNDAMYF's IAF grant provided FDM the necessary seed capital for the project's centerpiece: a savings and credit alternative to conventional banks. By joining FDM as an associate, a woman can access start-up capital with which to launch individual or collective micro-enterprise ventures. The associate-applicant then articulates an idea and demonstrates its feasibility based on an extensive market study that identifies potential strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Once qualified for an initial loan of \$100, she signs a formal agreement specifying the terms of the loan, which two other associates must counter-sign. A member of FUNDAMYF's staff works with the borrower to tailor her repayment schedule. Weekly, bi-weekly or monthly installments can be delivered to the office or to the bank managing the FUNDAMYF account. Borrowers who successfully invest and repay the initial loan can apply to borrow up to \$800 more. Total credit averages \$350 per applicant. According to FUNDAMYF, a 96 percent repayment rate results from the fact that the system is monitored by every borrowing member, a powerful incentive to meet obligations in a timely manner.

Katy Cornejo, a founding member of FDM, provides a good example of the entrepreneurship the credit

system fostered. She wanted to launch a business that would fill a specialized niche rather than duplicate existing activities. After assessing the needs and market in her neighborhood, she decided to sell new and used computers and parts. "With my first loan, I bought three computers and a few accessories," she said, "and then invited people to see what I had. I was surprised by the response from clients from Peru as well as from Huaquillas, including institutions that needed equipment and parts for accounting programs. It seemed as though I had hardly sold one computer when I needed to replace it to maintain a good rotation of stock."

Cornejo realized that she could expand her business to include repairs and assembly, but to embark on this new endeavor, she would need additional support. So she invited her husband to work with her, and, given the obvious viability of her business, he put his initial skepticism aside and joined forces. "My husband and I took some basic classes but mostly we just trained ourselves to build computers from scratch and fix them," she explained. "With that, we began earning additional income." Cornejo further diversified with a consulting service for first-time buyers, helping them identify their needs and guiding them through the most affordable equipment. Finally, she and her husband began offering workshops on maintenance, virus protection and other technical features of computer ownership.

Once she paid off her initial loan, Cornejo approached FDM again. "This second loan really showed my husband that I was a vital contributor to this business," she said. "He began to understand that he and I needed to be equal partners to make this business work. He started treating me with more respect, which boosted my confidence. Since I saw money coming into our family that I had helped earn, I began to understand my value as a contributor to supporting myself and my family. Every woman should take on the challenge of setting up her own business for a better life at home and in society." Cornejo stresses passing what she has learned to other women and to her children.

Even a slim profit of \$1 to \$4 daily allows an FDM loan recipient to provide for her family. Additionally, these women have acquired an appreciation of their rights and an expectation of respect. Through an arrangement with FDM's bank, borrowers deposit their

repayments directly into FDM's account. This allows them to experience "plugging into" the financial system, a convenience that entrepreneurs in the formal sector take for granted and a feature of economic interaction that instills confidence.

Thanks to IAF's award to FUNDAMYF, FDM no longer needs donor assistance. Interest payments from its more than 900 members sustain the loan fund and pay the salaries of two employees. FUNDAMYF staff and members attribute this outcome to a variety of factors:

- the associates' ability to draw upon their experience in managing informal businesses;
- the drive of single heads-of-household to provide for their children;
- the members' understanding that change is only possible if they make it happen;
- the awareness that every member can be a link in a tight support network and that each person is stronger in this group than alone;
- the inclusion of each member's family in her business plan to ensure as much support as possible;
- ongoing training in setting up, managing and evaluating projects, basic accounting systems, and community credit funds and banks.

Clearly this project is a success story. Because of each woman's initiative and hard work, diverse new businesses are flourishing in Huaquillas: photocopying services, an aerobics studio, restaurants, markets, beauty salons, tailor shops specializing in baptismal clothing and in flags, and retail shops selling appliances, beauty products, first-aid kits, gasoline and prepared food. There are also candy-makers, brick-makers, a welder specializing in home security grilles and a professional photographer. FUNDAMYF has brought opportunities to Huaquillas. Even more impressive is a change in attitude. FDM associates are recognized for their capability and commitment. They speak at public events; political candidates value their support. They have shown the mayor and city council, whom they advise, the importance of listening to their constituents when development plans are in the design phase—and that short-term accomplishments can signal the beginning of long-term change.

María Eugenia Lima is the president of FUNDAMYF. Marnie Schilken is IAF representative for Ecuador.

ACCEPTING THE CHALLENGE of HIV/AIDS

By Oscar Ruiz

Isla Margarita, in the Minor Antilles, is located approximately 14 miles northeast of the Venezuelan mainland. Along with the islands of Cubage and Cache, it belongs to the state of Nueva Esparta, home to 300,000 people. A tropical climate and nice beaches make Margarita a popular tourist destination, but that's not what aroused my interest.

During my two years at the Inter-American Foundation, I tried to learn about the role of disabled individuals in contemporary development assistance and the IAF's support for self-help involving such individuals. I specifically worked with the Venezuela portfolio, and discovered that I was actually responsible for an example of what I was looking for: Centro de Formación Popular Renaciendo Juntos (CEPOREJUN) whose project on Isla Margarita serves people with HIV/AIDS, a group generally classified as disabled. A focus on job training and integration into the labor force sets CEPOREJUN apart from most organizations dealing with people with HIV/AIDS, which usually address health issues.

When I knew I would be visiting Venezuela, I arranged to interview Gerarda Fraga, CEPOREJUN's founder and general coordinator. A criminologist by virtue of her degree from Madrid's Universidad Complutense and a social worker by vocation, until founding CEPOREJUN, she had dedicated her professional life to helping women and children in poor neighborhoods of Caracas. In 1998, under her guidance, CEPOREJUN successfully applied to the IAF for a grant to fund technical assistance, training, credit and other support to strengthen families, micro-enterprises and organizations in the state of Falcón, in northwest Venezu-

ela. In 2001, a second successful application resulted in an award of \$258,238 for job training and enterprise support to unemployed or low-income residents of Nueva Esparta who are living with HIV/AIDS.

What is the attitude toward HIV on Isla Margarita?

There is still a lot of prejudice and fear directed at the people with HIV in all social economic sectors of society. Margariteños who don't know about the disease start talking and then rumors explode like a powder keg, which affects local businesses and, most importantly, people with HIV. Because of fear of HIV, shoppers who were going to buy fish don't buy; tourists who were planning to visit the island don't come. This fear is rooted in ignorance.

How widespread is AIDS in Venezuela?

Right now, the problem with trying to get a sense of how many people have AIDS is that the government is not collecting data. Information shared by the Luis Ortega Hospital two years ago indicates that here on Isla Margarita, at least 600 people suffer from AIDS. We estimate that nine times that number are HIV positive.

How did CEPOREJUN get started?

CEPOREJUN was legally constituted in 1993 and we started working on micro-enterprise projects with young people. We decided to go to Falcón because nothing was being done there to develop micro-enterprise. We started as three individuals who worked and slept in a room someone loaned us. The people

Ceramic figures by a CEPOREJUN artist.

ART COURTESY OF AUDRA JONES



we worked with sold artisan products, *raspados* (cones of crushed ice and fruit juice), popcorn and soap. Later we received a grant from the Venezuelan government, then from the IAF, and CEPOREJUN began to grow.

Why did CEPOREJUN get involved with people with HIV/AIDS?

The idea of working with people with HIV began when I came back from Spain in 1987. I had a friend who knew a person with HIV called Frank García. When I met him he told me something I will never forget: “Gerarda, what kills us is not AIDS, but discrimination and rejection.” Frank couldn’t get a job because of his disease and he was so poor that he couldn’t afford medicine. So we decided to develop a farm operated by people who are HIV positive in collaboration with other organizations. Frank, as well as other artisans who were HIV positive, didn’t want to be involved in the beginning, but they ended up helping. The project was unsuccessful because the mentality at that time was that these people were going to die, and, sadly, that was what normally happened. When the project failed, each group went its separate way.

Then Frank died, and I wanted to do something to help people like him, not because HIV/AIDS was the “in” thing, but because they really needed help. Our research showed that of the 23 Venezuela states, Nueva Esparta had the second highest percentage of people with HIV/AIDS and married women were especially affected. We also learned there were only 10 organizations working on this topic in all of Venezuela, and maybe three or four were solid.

An important resource for us was Osvalda Pérez, coordinator for sexually transmitted diseases at the Luis Ortega Hospital on Isla Margarita. She told me that the biggest need of people with HIV is money, that the reason they are dying is they can’t feed themselves. I talked to our board and we decided to risk working with people with HIV. After we moved our office from Falcón to Margarita, we started contacting people for financial help. When Audra [Jones, IAF representative for Venezuela] visited in 2001, I gave her a proposal. In June she came back and told me she was interested. We were very surprised and happy when we got the news. With the approval of funding in September, the project for people with HIV took off.

What was it like working with this group?

Well, things began slowly. We planned meetings and only one person would show up—or no one. Even so, we were confident of the concept, but we weren’t sure of our strategy. We knew how to work with fishermen, kids, women, but not people with HIV. We didn’t realize the extent of the fear and the ignorance and of their own concerns. Eventually, instead of the hospital coordinator, other people with HIV would spend the whole morning in the hospital talking to patients with HIV about their experience. After this, there was an increase in workshop attendance.

What does CEPOREJUN offer?

We give training in ceramics, tapestry, construction, weaving and computers. Our beneficiaries decide the areas. We also offer job counseling; we help tailor resumes. An important aspect of the project has been to convince businesses to hire people with HIV. It has been difficult, very difficult. You have to tell the person to whom you are speaking that the person being hired tested positive for HIV; if you don’t and the employer learns the truth, the employee will be fired. We organize meetings in which the members help each other with the emotional element. The project with artisans that are HIV positive has expanded to the point that we now have artisans that don’t have the virus collaborating with our organization. We’re teaching specific skills to help sell their work on the street as well as in the studio. Most specialize in clay, a small group specializes in glass, wood and other materials. We also assist with credit, so far approximately 6 million *bolivares* (about \$3,133).

Why was it so difficult to get people with HIV involved in the workshops?

I think it is difficult all over the world except maybe in Africa where it is more “normal” to be HIV positive and the rejection is less compared to Latin America. In Venezuela, fear of rejection by family and friends makes people afraid to say that they are HIV positive and afraid to participate. When we advertised our school, the response was good, but the people with HIV asked us not to do it again because the advertisement makes uninfected people associate AIDS with people going into the studio. The person with the virus feels vulnerable.

Do people with HIV get support from their family?

Most people with HIV have a family member who is aware of the situation. We have had relatives involved in our programs, helping us in the cooperatives. Whereas others just plain reject the person with HIV, these family members can become overly protective.

Can you describe your program?

In clay craftsmanship we created a cooperative that supports nine workshops. We have also supported the consolidation of workshops in glass and wood painting. In these workshops the artisans learn how to design and craft products, they learn painting techniques, how to use the oven. To complete the necessary credits to pass the course, they need to have worked at least 40 hours. I would say it takes a person approximately three months to finish the program, but this varies. One Saturday we can have 25 people in the workshop, and the next week only two. The person with HIV who really wants something goes after it and finishes quickly.

What have you accomplished for people who are HIV positive?

There are several entrepreneurs that otherwise wouldn't have had the opportunity to succeed. We also have families of people with HIV who have developed solid micro-enterprises. We have more sources of credit, including a government agency, which here in Venezuela is not easy to enlist. We have assembled support groups. We are also proud of the cooperative formed with people who have HIV. In such a short time, CEPOREJUN has become a reference center for them and for organizations that want to work with people who have HIV/AIDS. Already the press has mentioned us in two articles about alternatives for people with HIV. I think that is nice.

We had a negative experience when we started. Someone from a neighborhood association reported us to the Health Ministry for working with homosexuals and prostitutes, but the report was not taken seriously because the Health Ministry has collaborated with us and knows us well. It is very hard not to get attached to the people we work with and we know that some are going to die and that we will be hurt when that happens.



CEPOREJUN artist.

Are there other organizations in Venezuela that work with people with HIV on labor insertion?

We are the only organization working in job placement that I'm aware of. Representatives from approximately 18 organizations have visited us to hear about our experience, but they focus on prevention, medicine, the virtual library on HIV/AIDS and health, meaning they have a clinical facility whose services include a laboratory. We hope in the future others will continue what we're doing.

What is your vision for CEPOREJUN?

Although in theory the Constitution protects all Venezuelans equally, my main goal would be to pressure the Labor Ministry to draft a law that says people with HIV have the same right to a job as anyone else. We also want to multiply the number of organizations working with people who have HIV, but first, we need to strengthen the structure of the existing organizations. To improve services, we want a system that coordinates the different organizations, and I believe this can be done. We would also like to publicize our experience internationally, especially in other Latin American countries, and sell the idea to organizations who would then sell the idea the way we have.

Oscar Ruiz worked for IAF as a program staff assistant and is now studying law.

WATER SERVICES for Copan Communities

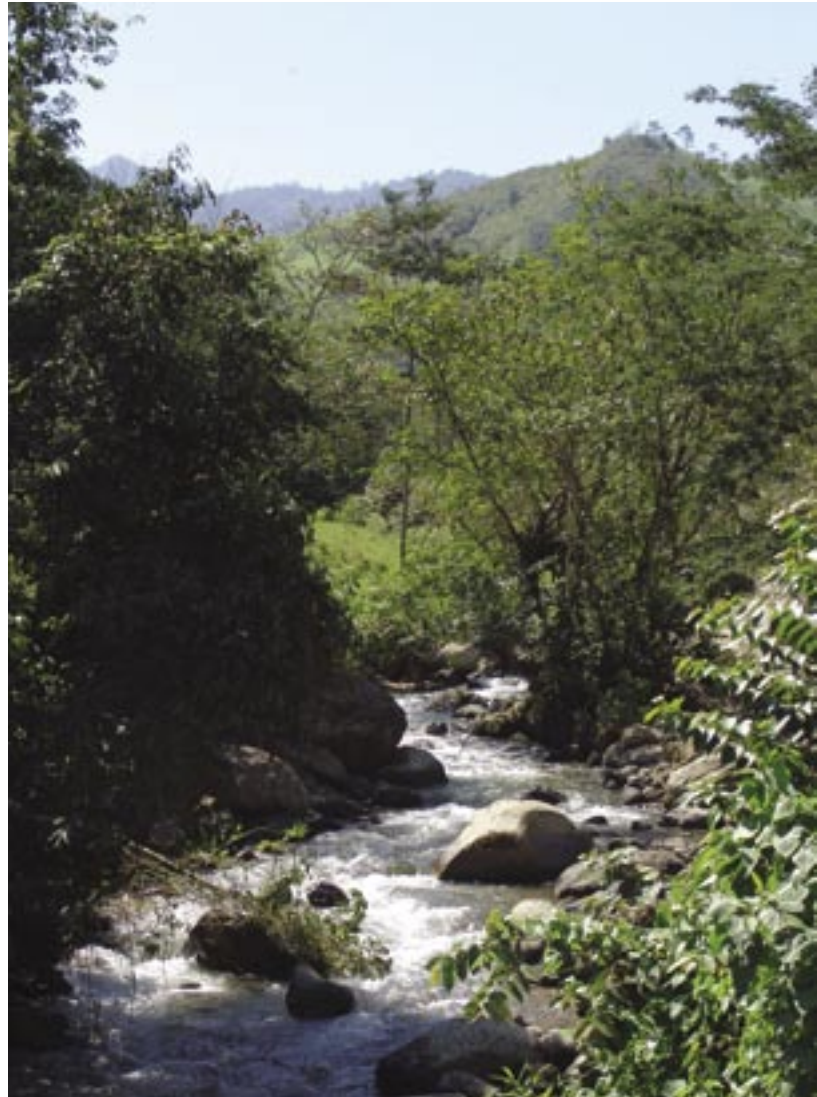
By Fabiola Palma and Sean Sprague

All photos by Sean Sprague

Through its latest project, Comunidades Organizadas por Municipio para el Agua Limpia (COMAL), Honduran grantee Agua Para el Pueblo (APP) coordinates initiatives to manage natural resources, especially water for human consumption, rural sanitation and microbasins, in 25 Maya Chortí communities of the Copán River basin.

All suffer from overcrowding, environmental degradation, a high incidence of infectious diseases, particularly among children under 5, high rates of maternal mortality, insufficient educational facilities and lack of employment opportunities, among other problems. Access to clean water is basic to solving all of them. APP is not only working on infrastructure but also on strengthening relations among local water boards and other grassroots organizations so they can reach consensus on the rational use of water resources and monitor and mitigate contamination.

APP facilitates community participation in its assessment of the microbasins and water quality, in strategies for sustainability, in its plans for improving the water supply and sanitation systems, and in infrastructure management. This makes residents aware of how to prevent and correct problems. Because the 25 communities are investing financially in infrastructure and beneficiaries are donating their labor, APP believes the improved services will be used efficiently. Eventually APP



envision a system of water and sanitation services sustained by user fees and benefiting even the most neglected communities.

Fabiola Palma is IAF's data verifier in Honduras. Sean Sprague is a professional photographer whose work has appeared in Grassroots Development since 1989.



Agua Caliente is noted for its natural springs that gush hot water into the nearby river and a swimming pool for tourists. Despite this surprising abundance of water, local residents had endured an erratic, unsafe supply until APP became involved. With manpower supplied by the local water committee, an impressive 16,000 gallon tank was constructed on a hill above the village.

Left: Honduras is a mountainous country with fairly low population density and water is not in short supply. The Copán River flows along the valley where Agua Caliente, a village of 150 households, with a population of 775, is situated. Although this river is slightly polluted from washing and from some chemical run-off, it is still reasonably pure. Along with the rich tropical vegetation, it is part of the natural beauty that attracts visitors to the area.



An APP engineer (baseball cap) teaches Agua Caliente's water committee about maintenance, including the correct amount of chlorine to make the water safe and how to test the chlorine content weekly. A small fee charged to each household pays for chemicals and equipment. The system is designed to last at least 20 years.



For children, turning on the tap at home is still a novelty.

Thanks to new water system in Agua Caliente, this family has a constant supply of safe drinking water in a tank from which they ladle out what they need for washing, cooking and drinking.



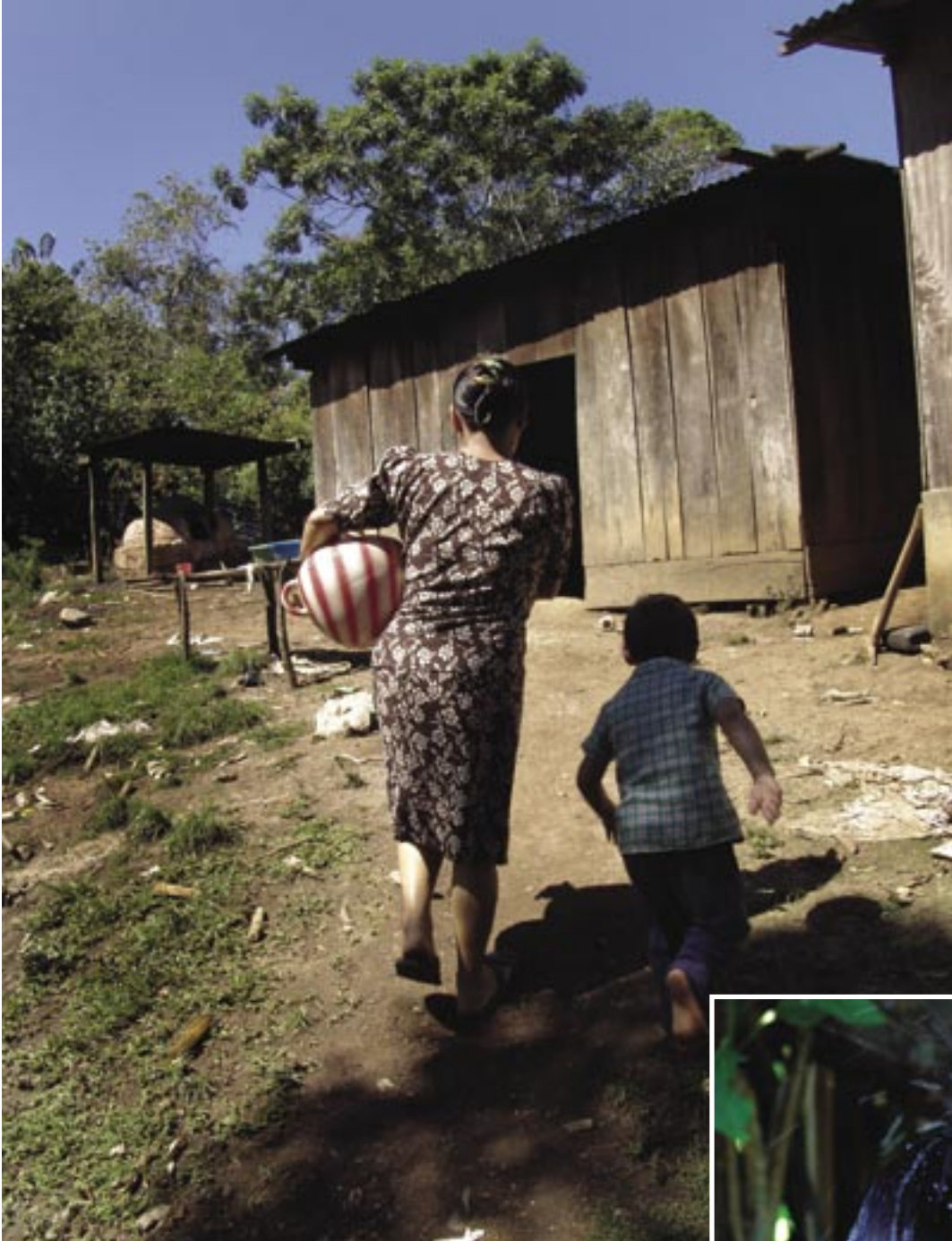
The newly installed system supplying fresh, safe drinking water has greatly improved the health and potential lifespan of Agua Caliente residents, who before might have suffered from water-borne diseases and parasites. It also frees them from the stress of waiting for erratic service from an antiquated system and the daily drudgery of carrying water great distances from a well or spring to their homes.



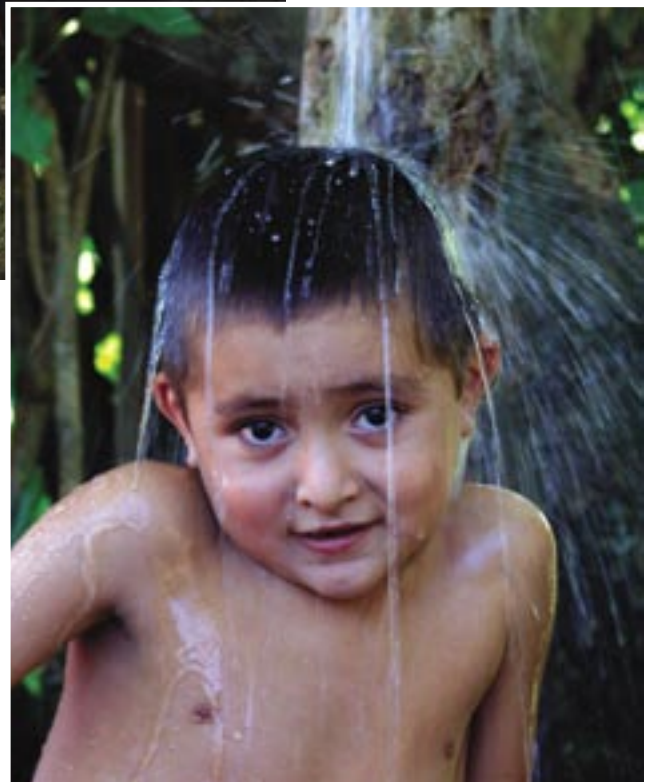
Santa Rosita now has a tank similar to the one in Agua Caliente, about 20 miles away, allowing this woman to fetch water from her own private tap a mere 10 feet from her house.



The APP engineer uses flip charts to explain to members of the Santa Rosita water committee the technology for processing and delivering safe drinking water. He also provides information on nutrition, preventive health care, building latrines and other topics. Committee members, all landless campesinos, work on a nearby hacienda. The landowner had never provided safe water and was happy that APP offered to build a system for the community.



A woman and her son approach their home in Los Arcos after a steep trudge uphill carrying the family's drinking water from a spring in the valley below, which must be done several times a day. APP is negotiating with Los Arcos the installation of a new water system similar to Agua Caliente's and Santa Rosita's. Los Arcos campesinos live on a large estate and work for one to two dollars a day.



Antonio enjoys a bath, thanks to Agua Caliente's new water system.

Grassroots Power Partnerships

A mobile market for street vendors in El Salvador, a payment-for-environmental-services program in Ecuador and a recycler's cooperative in Brazil appear to have very little in common. But each project propelled the IAF grantee who launched it—respectively Fundación Redes, the Corporación para el Desarrollo de los Recursos Naturales Renovables (CEDERENA) and Associação dos Catadores de Papel, Papelão e Material Reaproveitável (ASMARE)—into full partnership with local government.

Representatives of the three NGOs traveled to Washington to share their experience and network with 450 development professionals and government officials at the first International Conference on Local Development held June 16-18, 2004, and co-sponsored by the IAF, the World Bank, the German Development Bank, and the German Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation. The session “Power, Partnerships and Decision-Making in the Community: The Role of NGOs and Grassroots Organizations as Agents of Local Development” emphasized the IAF grantees’ work toward better governance and services for their communities.

Juan Martínez, executive director of Fundación Redes, described how his organization’s alliance with the municipality and the private sector addressed traffic in San Salvador’s historic Mejicanos district by relocating bus stops and offering street vendors alternative venues, including a mobile market. Fundación Redes had already managed a micro-enterprise program in the departments of Chalatenango, Cabañas and Cuscatlán, so it was well positioned to lead the effort toward a “market on wheels,” which IAF funding helped consolidate. Now approximately 100 street vendors rotate among six designated locations in the market they operate, thanks to REDES’ training and its loan program that allowed them to buy kiosks and equipment.

CEDERENA, a network of professional agronomists, foresters, economists, engineers and sociologists, used its IAF grant for a low-tech watershed conservation model that resulted in better services

in the municipality of Pimampiro. According to Robert Yaguache, CEDERENA executive director, the program is structured around a fund supported by surcharges on urban water consumption and channeled into payments to farmers maintaining forest cover. A municipal ordinance formalized the fund, which is managed by a committee that includes Pimampiro’s mayor and financial director, the head of the municipal Environmental Commission and a CEDERENA representative. The program’s success in reversing environmental degradation has turned on the municipality’s political commitment, the farmers’ willingness to participate and CEDERENA’s technical assistance. A second IAF award is funding expansion into 10 additional municipalities.

Maria das Gracias Marçal, revered in Belo Horizonte as Doña Geralda, is ASMARE’s general coordinator and past president; Jose Aparecido Gonçalves, project coordinator for the Catholic Church’s Pastoral da Rua, calls her a legend. Together they told how she and other homeless scavengers, after being bulldozed from their homes on city land early one August morning in 1988, coalesced to found a recycling cooperative and develop it into a model enterprise. Now, 16 years after the brutal eviction, ASMARE provides trash collection services for Belo Horizonte. Its 250 members are paid three times the minimum wage and receive health and education benefits and a quarterly share of its annual profits. Doña Geralda attributed the success to the members’ activism and commitment—and perfect timing. In the early 1990s, the city elected a mayor sympathetic to the recyclers and aware of their potential.

Also representing IAF’s grantees at the conference were Sérgio Gregório Baierle from Centro de Assessoria e Estudos Urbanos (CIDADE) in Porto Alegre, Brazil, and Gerardo Bacalini from Federación de Asociaciones Centros Educativos para La Producción Total (FACEPT), a network of 21 schools in Argentina’s rural Buenos Aires province. Both joined in additional presentations for the Inter-American Dialogue, the Ecuadorian Embassy, and the Esquel Foundation’s Civil Society Task Force. —*Gabriela Boyer, IAF representative for Argentina and Paraguay*



Anthony Bebbington, left, of the University of Manchester, and Aldo Panfichi of the Universidad Católica del Perú.

For more information on the International Local Development Conference, log onto <http://www1.worldbank.org/sp/ldconference/index.asp>. ASMARE's work is referenced in "Recyclers on the March," Grassroots Development, 2004, and in Judith Morrison's "A City and Its Scavengers: From Eviction to Trust," Grassroots Development, 2002. CEDERENA'S projects are described in Robert Yaguache's "Payment for Preservation of Forests and High Mountain Grasslands," Grassroots Development, 2003. Paula Durbin's "The IAF in Argentina," also in the 2003 journal, includes a section on FACEPT.

Local Spaces and Civic Action

IAF-supported research conducted by the Fundación Nacional Superior de la Pobreza in Santiago was discussed March 8 and 10 at "Local Governance and the Creation of Local Spaces for Civic Action," a seminar

split between the Lyndon Baines Johnson School of Public Affairs in Austin and the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in Washington, D.C. The research was coordinated by Gonzalo de la Maza, a Chilean sociologist, and Rodrigo Villar, a Colombian anthropologist. The Inter-American Foundation, the Wilson Center and the University of Texas-Austin co-sponsored the event.

Looking at specific examples of new public spaces for citizen participation were Aldo Panfichi of the Universidad Católica del Perú, Cristina Filgueiras of the Universidad Católica of Minas Gerais and the University of Manchester's Anthony Bebbington. Panfichi spoke on *mesas de concertación*, or roundtables, in Puno, Peru, which he said allow more voices to be heard but complicate policy-making. Filgueiras detailed how the members of IAF-funded ASMARE, the trash recycling cooperative in Belo Horizonte

described in the above note, engaged in a mutually beneficial dialogue with the city that won the recyclers a major contract. Bebbington reported his findings on a power shift toward the indigenous majority in Guamote, Ecuador, where the IAF had invested in the Comité de Desarrollo Local de Guamote.

Gabriel Murillo of the Universidad de los Andes in Bogota, Andrew Selee of the Wilson Center, and the University of Texas' Peter Ward and Bryan Roberts offered commentary. A final publication on the research, expected at the end of the year, will also include studies of cases in Chile, Colombia, Guatemala, and Mexico by, respectively, Carlos Ochsenius, Fabio Velásquez, John Durston and Manuel Canto.

Public Spaces Workshop

The workshop series "Project on Decentralization, Local Initiatives and Citizenship," co-sponsored by the IAF and the Wilson Center, ended May 13 with a celebrity event at the Universidad de los Andes in Bogota that starred two of the city's former mayors, Antanas Mockus and Enrique Peñalosa.

The select group listening to them at the workshop titled "The Redefinition of Public Space in Colombia" included political scientists from Mexico and the United States as well as Colombia. "I feel like an insect surrounded by entomologists," commented Mockus who had been in office from 1995 to 1997 and from 2000 to 2003. Peñalosa had served between Mockus' two terms.

Both men are credited with turning Bogota into a much safer and less congested city. Despite the fact that both are running for president in 2006, they didn't hesitate to recognize each other's accomplishments during presentations that were animated and surprisingly complementary. Mockus, who uses "hardware" and "software" to refer to infrastructure and civic behavior, stressed the importance of *cultura ciudadana*, or software, in improving urban life. Peñalosa's greatest achievement might be Bogota's rapid transit bus system, the *transmilenio*, based on



Enrique Peñalosa

a reconfiguration of Bogota's existing hardware, and he emphasized the role of public works.

As the workshop progressed, public space clearly took on the definition of the streets, sidewalks, bicycle paths and parks that connect urban

residents. During the afternoon session, government responsibility for this space was discussed by experts on Colombia's major provincial cities. Alejandro Echeverri, director of strategic projects in Medellin, spoke on Mayor Sergio Fajardo's elaborate plans for improvement, especially in transportation. Hermann Alfonso, an architect, reported on Bucaramanga's Corporation for Public Space, which he directs. Fabio Velásquez of the Universidad del Valle contrasted the case of Cali where interest in public space is minimal.

The Bogota workshop was also co-sponsored by Fundación Terpel of Colombia. Previous events in the series were held between December and March in Argentina, Bolivia, Guatemala and Brazil.

PAULA DURBIN



Workshop director Gabriel Murillo, of the Universidad de los Andes, and Antanas Mockus.



Community Infrastructure: Before and After

Among dozens of service infrastructure projects undertaken in six Panamanian provinces by IAF's 2003 grantee Instituto Panameño de Desarrollo Humano y Municipal (IPADEHM) are a suspension footbridge over the Río Las Guías in Calobre, Veraguas province, which replaces a structure that could not be crossed in winter when heavy rains raised the water to dangerous levels, and a new community center on the site of a rustic lean-to in the Comarca Ngöbe Buglé, an indigenous territory. For each project, IPADEHM mobilized twice the funds it drew from its IAF grant. —John Reed, IAF representative for Panama



COURTESY IPADEHM



African Descendants in Mexico



"Tita," from the exhibit *African by Legacy, Mexican by Birth*.

A little known feature of contemporary Mexico's diversity is a concentration of African descendants in coastal communities of Oaxaca, Guerrero and Veracruz. To raise awareness of the challenges facing Mexicans of African descent, the IAF co-sponsored a series of events on May 11 and 12 in Washington, D.C., partnering with the National Council of La Raza (NCLR), the Inter-Agency Consultation on Race in Latin America and the Mexico Institute of the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

More than 180 individuals from government agencies, private organizations and universities attended one or more of the activities—a strong turnout considering the scant public attention Afro-Mexican issues have traditionally received. Under the front page headline "Discriminado y Casi Invisible," the Mexico City daily *El Universal* highlighted the opening breakfast panel that included Sagrario Cruz-Carretero of the University of Veracruz, Bobby Vaughn of Notre Dame

de Namur University and Jonathan Fox, a former IAF fellow now teaching at the University of California at Santa Cruz. *Tiempos del Mundo*, a Washington newspaper with a Hispanic readership, also covered the series.

Although the Mexican government does not officially collect data on African-descendants, Cruz-Carretero said the group is estimated at between 1 and 2 percent of Mexico's roughly 100 million inhabitants. Speaking again at an evening forum at the NCLR's Washington headquarters, both she and Vaughn pointed to discriminatory treatment in a society where, they said, "blackness" is often considered a physical characteristic rather than an ethnic or cultural identity. They noted that Afro-Mexicans tend to live in the poorest states and are disproportionately characterized by low income, limited access to health care, inadequate education and other negative social indicators. While indigenous Mexican groups have organized to assert their rights and demand social justice, no similar social movement has emerged yet around the condition of African descendants. Some Afro-Mexicans, however, are trying to raise awareness of their cultural heritage and of racial discrimination.

In tandem with the evening presentation and reception, the IAF coordinated an exhibit of photos by Ayana Vellissia Jackson which remained open to the public at NCLR through late May. The documentaries *Sangre Africana*, an exploration of Mexico's African legacy directed by Roberto Olivares, and *La Raiz Olvidada*, a historical survey by Rafael Rebollar Corona, both shown at Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies, offered grist for discussion at the final event of the series.

IAF grants have furthered social and cultural awareness as well as viable economic activities in communities of African descent throughout Latin America and the Caribbean. Recent outreach in Mexico has included targeted dissemination of IAF's call for proposals and meetings and workshops on community planning and needs assessment in enclaves of African descendants. —Jill Wheeler, IAF representative for Mexico

Honored and Invited

The Ecuadorian government awarded 2002 grantee Movimiento Mi Cometa its Medal for Institutional Merit in recognition of the IAF grantee's efforts on behalf of excluded and marginalized children and young adults in Guayaquil's Guasmo Sur neighborhood. According to Dana Hill, a U.S. volunteer with Mi Cometa, approximately 425,000 people live in Guasmo Sur, which is flooded regularly during the winter, and almost half of the working population is unemployed. A grassroots group, Mi Cometa was launched in 1990, when its young members began organizing the neighborhood street by street to improve homes and job opportunities. "Mi Cometa's programs—in family development, women's and youth leadership, microcredit, neighborhood watch, health, housing, a children's Head-Start activity, and communication—are slowly reaching more people," said Hill.

Mi Cometa was invited to represent Ecuador at el Congreso Profesional Iberoamericano de Comunicación Empresarial y Ceremonial, held in Rio de Janeiro April 5-8, 2005. Delegate Karina Castro, who handles Mi Cometa's relations with the media, spoke on the group's experience with measuring results of a communication and public relations campaign. Later that month, César Cárdenas Ramírez spoke at el Congreso Internacional de Organizaciones que Trabajan con Niños de la Calle.

Indigenous Celebration

At dawn last Sept. 21, 45 indigenous Latin Americans sponsored by the IAF joined other tribal groups on the National Mall for the Native Nations Procession that preceded the opening of the Smithsonian's National Museum of the American Indian. An estimated 20,000 marchers fell in behind Senator Ben Nighthorse Campbell and museum director Richard West, both in Cheyenne regalia, and proceeded to the foot of the U.S. Capitol for the dedication ceremonies. Later, IAF's grantees demonstrated their crafts and performing arts at the six-day First Americans Festival.

PATRICK BRESLIN



Peruvian dancers from Taquile Island where an IAF grant helped develop eco-tourism and revive local traditions. Salvador Huatta Yucra, center, celebrated his birthday during the First Americans Festival.

The presence of the grantees at the celebration capped a long and productive relationship between the IAF and native peoples of the Americas. The IAF's first years of operations in the 1970s coincided with the insistence by indigenous peoples worldwide on respect for their rights and on full inclusion in political and economic life. Over the past three decades, their movement has given rise to many innovative approaches to development, often with a cultural dimension, to which the IAF has responded.



Scissors dancers.

Some of the communities whose self-help efforts have been boosted by IAF grants were represented on the Mall: The Tarabuco and Jalq'a weavers from southern Bolivia participate in a program launched by IAF-supported Fundación para la Investigación Antropológica y el Etnodesarrollo (ASUR), whose focus is the recovery of Andean textile traditions. Musicians and dancers from Taquile, Peru, confirm the revitalization of their culture in connection with an IAF-funded project that has spurred the growth of eco-tourism on their island. With IAF's assistance, Kunas from Panama's indigenous territory have undertaken natural resource conservation in forested areas, mapping projects and community museums and have opened markets for their colorful molas.

Others funded by the IAF included scissors dancers from Lima, Suya dancers from Brazil and marimba makers from Guatemala. Additionally, the U.S. Department of State invited delegations of indigenous leaders from several countries to attend the museum opening as part of a 30-day visit that took them across the U.S. Among Argentina's delegation was Rosario Quispe, founder and president of Warmi Sayajsunqo, an association of Coya women who are using their IAF

award for a program of microcredit in hamlets around Abra Pampa, Jujuy (see *Grassroots Development* 2003).

The National Museum of the American Indian is a repository for 8,000 artifacts that bring together the diverse heritage of native peoples throughout the hemisphere. Architecturally a flow of graceful curves and monumental strength, the building has already been pronounced a must-see for visitors to Washington. "I've never seen anything like this museum," commented violinist Sebastián Paitan Ccanto, who accompanied the scissors dancers. "As an indigenous person I feel very proud and very happy to have been here."

PATRICK BRESLIN



Rosario Quispe, founder of Warmi Sayajsunqo, at the IAF.

Weaving a New Society

The Institute of Cultural Affairs, founded in the 1970s, is a loose network of organizations in 34 countries concerned with the human factor in global development, according to Richard Alton, who coordinated the ICA's sixth international conference held Aug. 15-21, 2004 in Antigua, Guatemala. Since 1984 representatives ICA affiliates and other organizations have been meeting every four years to discuss the latest issues. In 2004, 220 professionals from 25 countries came "to hear and think through strategies on a global basis," said Alton. "These conferences were developed to push people further."

IAF, the Ford Foundation, CIVICUS, OXFAM, United Nations Development Programme and the Centro de Formación de la Colaboración Española co-sponsored the Guatemala event which was organized into seven "threads," or working groups, ranging from youth development to the AIDS challenge. Two threads, on sustainable economic systems and building social capital, drew on the experience of past IAF grantees and representatives of the 80 projects currently in the Central America and Mexico portfolio. IAF senior representative Miriam Brandão and Azucena Díaz García, Rosamaria Cruz, Rolando Gutiérrez and Roberto García, IAF local liaison contractors in, respectively, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador and Nicaragua, selected the panelists and coordinated their input as well as site visits to local IAF projects.

Each of the four IAF grantees represented on the sustainable economic development panel, moderated by Roberto García, had, with a relatively small cash investment, launched projects that benefited an underserved community: Armando García Campos described how Asociación de Consultores para el Desarrollo de la Pequeña, Mediana y Microempresa (ACODEP), in the 14 years since it received \$100,000 from the IAF, has expanded its loan clientele from 850 Nicaraguans to 30,000 and is hoping to reach 100,000. Benjamín Son Turnil explained how Asociación de Cooperación para el Desarrollo Rural de Occidente

PAULA DUREN



IAF's social capital panel: left to right, Joaquín Cajbón Uscap, Carlos Cáceres, Rosamaría Cruz, Julio Córdoba, Francisco Rodríguez.

PAULA DUREN



IAF's sustainable economic development panel: left to right, Roberto García, Franklin Montana, Benjamín Son Turnil, Armando García Campos, IAF senior representative Miriam Brandao, Adolfo Sánchez.

(CDRO) followed an indigenous Mayan system of decision-making to improve conditions in Totonicapán, one of the poorest areas of Guatemala. Adolfo Sánchez told how Promotora de Productores y Emprendedores Salvadoreños overcame the uncertainty among farmers as to the advantages of crop diversification and working together. And Franklin Montano reported on the work of Asociación de Organizaciones de Microfinanzas (ASOMI) with some 80,000 subsistence Salvadoran micro-entrepreneurs, mainly women.

The thread on social capital addressed a more elusive concept: the connections among people that make cooperative action possible. Rosamaría Cruz moderated the panel of IAF grantee representatives: Carlos Cáceres of CODELSA spoke on his organization's efforts to activate all economic agents. Francisco Rodríguez explained how Fundación para la Reconstrucción y el Desarrollo (REDES) worked with the

municipal officials and street vendors to create the conditions for a “mobile market” in San Salvador and for its management by participating vendors. Joaquín Cajbón Uscap described his community’s support for the Rabinal Achi Museum in Baja Verapaz, Guatemala, which serves as a civil war memorial, cultural repository and training center. Its inspiration was the Oaxaca model that Julio Córdoba, of Fundación Comunitaria Oaxaca, called a “process of social construction” that has been successfully replicated in 19 locations. Ruth Hernández described Campesino’s project in Tlaxcala, Mexico, where a resolute community developed a plan to clean up its water supply, diversify agricultural production and reverse environmental degradation by promoting separation of solid waste.

Site Visits

Many participants reported that the two days of site visits to successful Guatemalan examples of self-help were the most instructive feature of the conference. The visit to OPCION, a 2004 IAF grantee that trains indigenous farmers from 90 organizations to work in tandem with Aj Ticonel, its business partner which buys the produce for sale to U.S. clients, emphasized the marketing side of development. For a look at OPCION’s operation, a busload of conference participants rode for two hours and spent another 20 minutes negotiating a treacherous footpath to Hipólito Hernández’s farm. Nestled among pine forests, Hernández’s fields bloomed with patypan squash in flower. Formerly a day laborer, Hernández currently employs six workers to help plant and harvest a rotating crop of snow peas and snap beans, as well as eggplant, peppers and baby squash. OPCION coordinates his output with that of similarly trained farmers so that Aj Ticonel is steadily supplied year round. Hernández can count on consistent payment, regardless of any glut in the broader market—and he can proudly point to two daughters who are high school graduates employed in white collar jobs.

At Aj Ticonel’s processing plant, women monitor quality and prepare the produce for export. Alberto Monterroso, plant president, takes the credit for

identifying clients on the East Coast of the United States and in California. To assure their standards are met, he has instituted on-site literacy classes for his employees. Turnaround is rapid; vegetables are exported immediately for optimum freshness. Reporter Celia W. Dugger covered Aj Ticonel extensively in an article that appeared in *The New York Times* of Dec. 28, 2004, and was widely circulated via the Internet. Dugger cited Aj Ticonel as “a rare success story” and, with \$2.5 million in vegetable sales in 2003, an exception to the title of her piece, “Supermarket Giants Crush Central American Farmers.” She attributed its “ability to exploit a global market” to Monterroso’s business savvy and his willingness to forego a large salary and invest in the plant and the farmers.

When the ICA participants visited in August, the processed vegetables had been put in cold storage while Monterroso waited for the signal to deliver them to hurricane-ripped Florida. The interruption in the otherwise finely calibrated choreography was a sobering reminder that even the global market is vulnerable to the elements.



At Aj Ticonel’s processing plant, Chinese peas are culled for export.

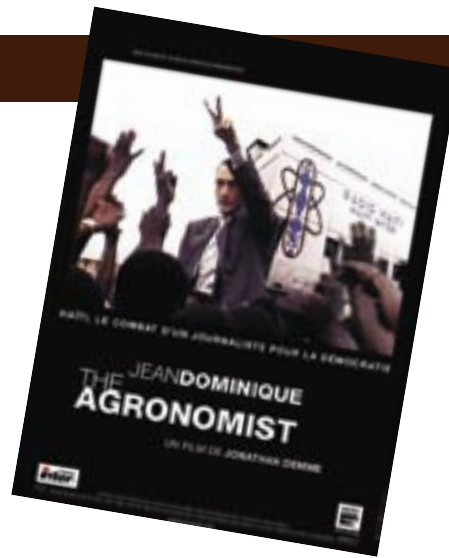
The Agronomist

Directed by Jonathan Demme

Think Film; 2004

Filmed in English, French and Kreyol (subtitled)

Available through amazon.com



Jonathan Demme's *The Agronomist* looks at contemporary Haiti through the story of Jean Dominique, owner and operator of the country's only independent radio station. Using a montage of film and interviews recorded on audio tape that he began collecting in 1986, Demme chronicles Dominique's courageous struggle to bring Haiti a step closer to democracy and peace. *The Agronomist* is filled with Haiti's music, its laughter and cries, its beauty and its slums. It also offers a glimpse into a tragic history, really 200 years of freedom denied, marked by foreign occupations, dictatorships, massacres, coups and fleeting flirtations with democracy. And it confirms the importance of a free press to a democratic society and to social justice.

Against this background, Dominique's own life unfolds. Born into Haiti's fair-skinned, French-speaking elite, he was sent to France to work toward a degree in agronomy. After returning home and campaigning unsuccessfully for land reform, Dominique bought a radio station, Radio Haiti Inter, and discovered the value of a mass medium of communication to grassroots advocacy. His decision to introduce Kreyol (Haitian Creole) to the airwaves brought the Haitian people unprecedented access to information and professional journalism. As the station gained in popularity, Haiti Inter pushed the envelope, calling for a free press in a country riddled with repression and political violence.

Demme shows how by simply broadcasting the news of dictators deposed abroad, in Nicaragua and Iran, for example, Dominique illuminated Haiti's own plight, thereby opening the door to dissent. Resolute despite several attempts on the business and on his life, Dominique, working with his wife, a U.S.-educated broadcast journalist and also a child of Haiti's privileged sector, continued offering an alternative to

the propaganda dispensed by Haitian media outlets. Eventually Haiti Inter's Kreyol-speaking audience became a serious challenge to authority, and Dominique was forced into exile. When he finally returned home, his enthusiastic fans descended on the Port-au-Prince airport for a massive welcome.

Initially a supporter of Jean Bertrand Aristide, the priest turned president, Dominique eventually questioned his policies and brought up allegations of corruption during a live interview. This marked the first time a Haitian political leader had been publicly confronted face-to-face by the Haitian media. Although the interview reaffirmed Haiti Inter's commitment to objective news coverage, it permanently damaged Dominique's standing with Aristide's administration. The film, however, does not fully delve into the souring of the relationship, nor into the circumstances of Dominique's violent death, shot in broad daylight, to which grief-stricken Haitians reacted by giving him a hero's funeral.

The Agronomist leaves one wanting to know more about these missing details as well as about Dominique's wife, Michele, who comes across as extraordinary in her own right. Demme's long and apparently close relationship with his subject is never explored either, nor is his interest in Haiti. But ultimately the film is powerful and inspiring, and its protagonist, who was virtually unknown outside Haiti during his life, is well served by it. *The Agronomist* effectively places Dominique in the pantheon of those who died because they insisted on telling the truth and it pays tribute to his legacy, to Radio Haiti Inter, to courageous journalism and to the Haitian people. —Eduardo Rodríguez-Frías, IAF program staff assistant



**Waiting for Rain:
The Politics and
Poetry of Drought
in Northeast Brazil**

By Nicholas Gabriel Arons

*The University of Arizona
Press: Tucson, 2004*

Available in English

In *Waiting for Rain: The Politics and Poetry of Drought in Northeast Brazil*, author Nicholas Arons convincingly argues that the devastating effects of centuries of drought in Northeastern Brazil are as much a result of politics as of nature. Against a background description of the dryness that has long plagued the vast region, he recounts the repeated failures of the Brazilian government to adequately acknowledge or address the magnitude of the crisis. He also holds that, because of official unwillingness to take responsibility or action, the economic and human costs of the drought have far exceeded what is acceptable in any modern country.

In his first chapters, Arons explores life in the Northeast beyond the expected agricultural disaster wreaked by the simple lack of rain and probes the accompanying human horrors he witnessed during a series of extended visits—unemployment, alcoholism, illiteracy, infant mortality, malnutrition and extreme poverty. He distinguishes his book on the Brazilian drought from the vast academic literature on the subject by incorporating the unique cultural and deeply spiritual undertones of the Northeast. His use of poetry, composed for decades to record the anguish of the inhabitants of the *sertão*, allows the various themes related to drought to unfold in the words of those who have lived it.

It is no coincidence that the parched Northeast is overwhelmingly the poorest region of Brazil, and the book constantly reminds us how drought and poverty are related. Arons is highly critical of the Brazilian government's mechanical gestures toward drought relief,

which he dismisses as self-serving, poorly thought-out and intended to benefit, if anyone, wealthy landholders. He cites the ill-planned solution of the 1930s, when the government forcibly removed *nordestinos* from drought-afflicted areas, and its investment in the 1950s of millions of dollars in an experiment to induce clouds to produce rain while other nations opted for the sound, successful science of irrigation systems.

While declaring he is not a Brazilian specialist, he enriches the drought issue with personal experience and presents it unencumbered by traditional socio-scientific methods or reporting styles. For anyone hoping to gain a better understanding of Brazil, *Waiting for Rain* is an excellent introduction to one of the tragic realities of life in the Northeast. Readers will come away from this book understanding drought and the poetry it has inspired from a Northeasterner's perspective. Interestingly, almost every other book grappling with the intricacies peculiar to the region amply addresses the issue of race; Arons's near total neglect of the subject is decidedly bold. —Courtney Brown, IAF program staff assistant

Key Issues in Development

*By: Damien Kingsbury, Joe Remenyi, John McKay
and Janet Hunt*

Palgrave Macmillan Press: New York, 2004

Available in English

Key Issues in Development provides a critical introduction to the theory, practice, and study of development. Australian authors Damien Kingsbury, Joe Remenyi, John McKay, and Janet Hunt, all development practitioners and university professors, believe development can be more effective if those in the field are aware of past attempts to eliminate absolute poverty. A variety of case studies supports their conclusion that while trends and approaches have changed since the early days of international assistance post-World War II, the lives of disadvantaged people remain the same.

The authors explore the plight of the poor in chapters each devoted to an issue deemed key to understanding why conditions in developing countries still need improvement: economic considerations, the impact of international aid, the requirement of political and civil development, the role of gender, the idea of development as “modernization,” theories of underdevelopment, regional variations, the environment, and community progress. Remenyi, the director of International and Community Development at Australia’s Deakin University, opens the discussion with a definition of development focused on the need to address hunger, shelter, education and basic services. In his chapter, Kingsbury, also of Deakin, notes the bind developing communities are in: if they want to prosper they must attract foreign capital, which, he says, requires them to undercut each other.

McKay, director of the Australian Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation Study Center at Monash University, looks at why some countries prosper under globalization while others stagnate or grow poorer. He also reviews the fallacies implicit in the modernization and dependency theories of the 1950s and 1960s. Hunt, of RMIT (Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology), questions the nature of foreign aid and who primarily benefits. She also explores the impact of gender roles and concludes that women, despite recent efforts, continue to be left out of the development process. This observation is not new.

Key Issues in Development makes the case for development as a continuing process of empowerment. Policies must be sound, the book maintains, and the right people must be involved. —Christina Violeta Jones, former IAF intern



Otros Amenazantes: Los nicaragüenses y la formación de identidades nacionales en Costa Rica

By Carlos Sandoval García

Editorial de la Universidad de Costa Rica: San José, 2003

Ohio University Press:
Athens, 2004

Available in Spanish and English

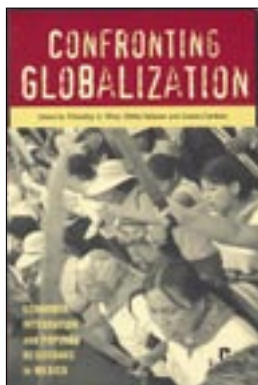
In *Threatening Others: Nicaraguans and the Formation of National Identities in Costa Rica*, sociologist Carlos Sandoval García explores the effect of ethnic stereotyping on human interaction. The book specifically focuses on attitudes toward some 250,000 Nicaraguan residents who, beginning in the 1980s, fled war and poverty to settle into construction and agricultural jobs in Costa Rica.

According to Sandoval García, the “practices, images and rituals through which one constructs a feeling of national belonging,” are developed historically over time. Currently however, he sees Costa Ricans beginning to define themselves in contrast to their depersonalized perception of Nicaraguans. Costa Ricans, he says, see Nicaraguans as, for example, violent and radically revolutionary, qualities viewed as threats to purportedly traditional Costa Rican values of nonviolence and representative democracy. Sandoval García sees the pattern of stereotyping perpetrated in editorials by writers claiming to expose the Nicaraguan influences threatening the nation and confirmed in the autobiographic accounts of immigrant children trying to negotiate the two cultures.

Based partly on analyses of these sources, Sandoval García concludes that his countrymen have reacted to the Nicaraguans in their midst differently than to the presence of other foreigners. According to him, not only do native-born Costa Ricans resent Nicaraguans for taking up precious space but they have made the Nicaraguan population the scapegoat for the decline in Costa Rica’s standard of living, once the highest in

Central America and enviable by almost any criterion. (He himself recommends shifting the blame for one element in the decline, the deterioration in public services and infrastructure, to the government's embrace of neoliberal economic reform measures.) Furthermore, he says, the lack of any debate has allowed misperceptions to persist.

Threatening Others challenges Costa Ricans, and, for that matter, everyone in a multi-ethnic setting, to move past the traditional call for tolerance. Sandoval García suggests Costa Ricans recognize the diversity in their community, express their frustration through public discourse and focus on the individuality of their immigrant neighbors. Through such engagement, he says, societies become inclusive and realistic. It is encouraging that this book attacking discrimination received Costa Rica's National Monograph Award. —Megan Moriarty, IAF program staff assistant



**Confronting Globalization:
Economic Integration and
Popular Resistance in Mexico**

*Edited by Timothy A. Wise,
Hilda Salazar and Laura Carlsen*

*Kumarian Press: Bloomfield,
Conn., 2003*

*Available in English and
Spanish*

For better or for worse, the North American Free Trade Agreement swelled the flow of goods, services, ideas and people among the U.S., Canada and Mexico. Its impact is the focus of *Confronting Globalization: Economic Integration and Popular Resistance in Mexico*, a collection of 10 studies. They explore the problems globalization causes for the poor, but they also hold examples of communities organizing across the country and across borders to overcome these challenges. Two studies documenting experiences with

U.S.-based wood-products companies in the state of Guerrero are illustrative.

In the first, "Human Rights, Ecology, and Economic Integration: The Peasant Ecologists of Guerrero," Enrique Cienfuegos and Laura Carlsen argue that multinational companies take advantage of the local political context to maximize their benefits. For example, Boise Corporation worked with an association of *ejidos* (communities with collective land title) that was reportedly controlled by an iron-fisted *cacique*, or strongman, known for his willingness to allow the destruction of forests. While Boise paid higher prices for wood than local buyers, little benefit flowed to local workers. Eventually protests against the environmental degradation resulted in the controversial arrest and alleged torture of two activists. Paradoxically, their release was secured through Internet campaigns and cross-border alliances between nongovernmental organizations, also features of a more globalized world.

In "El Balcón, Guerrero: A Case Study of Globalization Benefiting a Forest Community," David Bray, an IAF representative from 1986 to 1997, and Leticia Merino look at a community's successful forestry enterprise and how it gained access to the global market. El Balcón was lucky: it had received a land grant and had also acquired a sawmill. The *ejido* community struggled at first to manage these assets but eventually hired a professional who imposed discipline and began to improve the bottom line. The new manager excluded most residents from operations, but they provided oversight through a Council of Principals. As the enterprise became profitable, residents were eventually rehired; now 80 percent of its employees are from the *ejido*. El Balcón was also fortunate that its major client, Westwood Forest Products of Washington, adheres to a hands-on style that is extraordinarily supportive of the community. One wishes the authors had delved deeper into development of such a productive relationship.

Other case studies in *Confronting Globalization* cover investor protection, intellectual property, migration and remittances, labor practices in *maquiladoras*, and

farming. One study documents the work of an IAF grantee, the Coordinador Estatal de Productores de Café Oaxaca (State Coalition of Coffee Producers of Oaxaca), which exports organic and Fair Trade coffee at higher than market prices and provides a variety of services for its members. An interesting follow-up

to this volume would be a more systematic look at how poor communities might take advantage of the currently debated Central American Free Trade Agreement and the upcoming Free Trade Agreement of the Americas. —Karen Juckett, IAF executive assistant

IAF Publications Still Available*



Spanish

Partnerships among civil society, business and government are a valuable tool in development and *Formación de Alianzas Para el Desarrollo Sostenible* offers practical guidelines to practitioners interested in using them toward improving the quality of life for the poor and the disadvantaged. It

takes the reader through the partnership process, from the planning stages to the construction of an alliance, and ends with a technique for measuring the impact. Examples of actual working partnerships from Latin America and the Caribbean are included.



English

The explosion in migration to the United States dramatically increased remittances to Latin America and the Caribbean at the same time official assistance was declining, a coincidence that has made remittances of interest to the development community. In March 2001, the IAF, the United Nations Economic Commission on Latin American and the World Bank co-sponsored the first multilateral conference on the topic. The presentations on the potential for channeling remittances into development projects are collected in *Approaches to Increasing the Productive Value of Remittances: Case Studies in Financial*

ed Nations Economic Commission on Latin American and the World Bank co-sponsored the first multilateral conference on the topic. The presentations on the potential for channeling remittances into development projects are collected in *Approaches to Increasing the Productive Value of Remittances: Case Studies in Financial*

Innovations and International Cooperative Community Ventures, coordinated by former IAF representative Carlo Dade.



English

Togetherness by Beryl Levinger and Jean McLeod examines the experiences of 12 partnerships—among NGOs, local government and, in some cases, businesses—working on grassroots development in five Latin American countries. The authors analyze the vocabulary, stages and types of these partnerships, as well as their benefits and burdens.

Lessons from on-site research do not always conform to conventional wisdom but find ample support in the data provided by projects on the ground.



English

Spanish

Uruguay is an urbanized society, but most of IAF's projects there have been based in rural areas. In *The Small Farmer Sector in Uruguay: A Partnership in Development Cooperation*, published in 1989, Cynthia Ferrin, a specialist in Uruguay's cooperative movement and an IAF field representative from 1974-1987, outlines how, through self-help and external support, cooperatives in the countryside confronted the challenges posed by the Uruguayan economic and political context of the late 20th century.

they know how...

by the inter-american foundation

REVISED 1991

English

Spanish



Congress created the IAF in 1969 to respond to the needs of people at the grassroots. Eight years later, IAF staff reflected on their experience with self-help development and produced *They Know How*. The title refers to *We Don't Know How*, an earlier exposé of foreign aid failures. Using IAF's relationships with 94 grantees, this book maintains that the

organized poor are the experts on improving conditions in their communities and can be responsible for their own self-help projects. A classic in development literature, the work was reprinted in 1991.



English

Spanish

Before its suspension in 2000, the IAF's doctoral fellowship program supported degree candidates in U.S. universities in their exploration of topics whose diversity is reflected in *Inquiry at the Grassroots: An Inter-American Foundation Fellowship Reader*. William Glade, then senior scholar at the Woodrow Wilson International Center, Charles A.

Reilly, then director of thematic studies at IAF, and Diane Bendahmane, then technical director for information services with the International Science and Technology Institute, joined forces in 1993 to edit this collection of reports on aspects of development and poverty alleviation.

ROGER ROWMAN



Gualberto Condori Beltrán in a photo published in *Grassroots Development* in 1988.



English

Spanish

New Paths to Democratic Development in Latin America: The Rise of NGO-Municipal Collaboration, a series of studies edited by Charles A. Reilly, formerly the IAF's director of research and thematic studies, captures the relationship of government and the third sector in various countries. Although the studies were completed in

1990 and 1991, they are still relevant to the debate as to who should provide social services and how to pay for them. The book makes the point that 72 percent of Latin Americans live in cities. It looks to NGOs to join with, rather than oppose, city government in addressing the needs of these urban dwellers.

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Pioneers in Organic Chocolate

— LUIS CRUZ MAMANI AND GUALBERTO CONDORI BELTRÁN —

The development community lost two grassroots heroes with the death of Luis Cruz Mamani on May 21, 2003, and Gualberto Condori Beltrán on Feb. 7, 2005. Luis was 51 and Gualberto was 46. Both had dedicated their lives to Bolivia's rural poor. They will be especially remembered as among the most committed and talented leaders of IAF grantee Central Regional de Cooperativas Agropecuarias e Industriales El Ceibo, a federation of co-ops with 900 Aymara, Quechua and Mosten members and one of Latin America's outstanding self-help efforts.

The two men, both indigenous Aymara from poverty-stricken backgrounds, arrived in Bolivia's eastern lowlands from the western altiplano with the waves of migrants in search of a better

future. In the early 1970s, they carved homesteads and farms out of the tropical forests in the corner of Bolivia's Amazon region known as the Alto Beni. Both had earned high school diplomas, and Cruz had a degree from a local teachers' college. Working through cooperatives, they put their education and talent in service to campesino neighbors struggling to earn a livelihood.

Luis and Gualberto's vision was a farmer-managed enterprise that would unite Alto Beni producers: El Ceibo, which they helped found and then lead for 20 years, overseeing, and participating in, programs in research, agricultural extension, planning, transport, business administration, accounting, marketing, and, eventually, export to Fair Trade, organic and other markets. El Ceibo received several IAF grants during its early phases, and Western European donors provided additional grants and soft loans. A stream of German volunteers assisted those who rotated annually

through the top positions in El Ceibo's multi-tiered leadership structure. Luis and Gualberto saw membership grow from 12 to 38 cooperatives spread throughout the region's mountains and along the Río Beni.

El Ceibo motivated farmers in the Alto Beni to abandon the mono-crop model common to the tropics in the 1970's, along with their dependence on petrochemicals and middlemen. These changes contributed to the transformation away from unsustainable systems of cacao production and from powerlessness in the marketplace. Today El Ceibo's members can

showcase an organic agroforestry production model which protects soil, rivers, forests and bio-diversity. Their enterprise, the first ever to produce and export organic cacao and chocolate products from Spanish-speaking South America,

buys 40 percent of Bolivia's cacao beans. Those not processed into El Ceibo's 40 different products for domestic and global markets are sold to other companies—who paid almost \$2 million for them in 2004.

Luis last served El Ceibo as its marketing manager, a post he left in 1998. During his tenure, he was invited to participate in a conference in the U.S. House of Representatives' Rayburn Building, where he offered congressional staff and others his perspective on effective strategies applicable to Latin American development and on the challenges small farmers face in an era of economic globalization. He spent his final years working with farmers on research into aromatic and medicinal plants for another innovative multi-community enterprise. His widow, Ana Maria Condori, a prominent grassroots leader in her own right who met Luis in the early 1970's, is developing this promising venture with Aymara communities, assisted by their daughter, an agronomist.



In the early 1990s Gualberto received a scholarship from El Ceibo to pursue a degree in business administration at San Andrés University in La Paz. His thesis was on El Ceibo as a social enterprise model combining both Western and Andean concepts. Almost a decade later, his daughter followed in his footsteps, obtaining the same degree from the same university in the same spirit of idealism and with the same passion. Throughout the first half of the 1990s Gualberto served El Ceibo in leadership and advisory positions and then as a mentor for younger leaders. As an official advisor to CIOEC, Bolivia's most important nation-wide network of producer associations, he shared insights from his El Ceibo experience. Subsequently he extended technical support to Aymara coffee growers' associations with the goal of helping them reach Fair Trade and organic markets abroad and become more competitive.

To commemorate its 25th anniversary, the IAF brought representatives of 16 grassroots projects to the Smithsonian Institution's 1994 Festival of American Folklife. Gualberto was one of El Ceibo's eight delegates to the open-air, interactive, culture- and development events managed by IAF's grantees, and he also participated as a panelist in a conference on international development held at the University of Chicago. Later we traveled together to Vermont to explore a possible contract with Ben and Jerry's, whose staff whipped up delicious trial batches of ice cream using El Ceibo's chocolate. Worldwide, manufacturers increasingly recognize cacao beans from the Alto Beni as among the most flavorful anywhere, and leaders like Luis and Gualberto deserve the credit.

This year, the Smithsonian displayed El Ceibo's accomplishment as part of Festival's program Food Culture U.S.A. As we pointed to the commercial success of the community-based enterprise and to its positive impact on the rain forest and other natural resources, Luis and Gualberto kept returning to my thoughts. Their social vision and lifelong service have left a lasting legacy. —Kevin Healy, IAF representative for Bolivia and Colombia and author of *Llamas, Weavings and Organic Chocolate*.

Luis Cruz Mamani in a Grassroots Development from 1988.





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